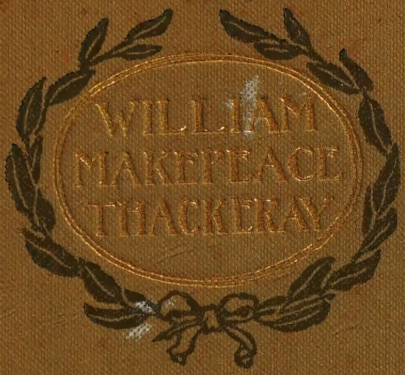
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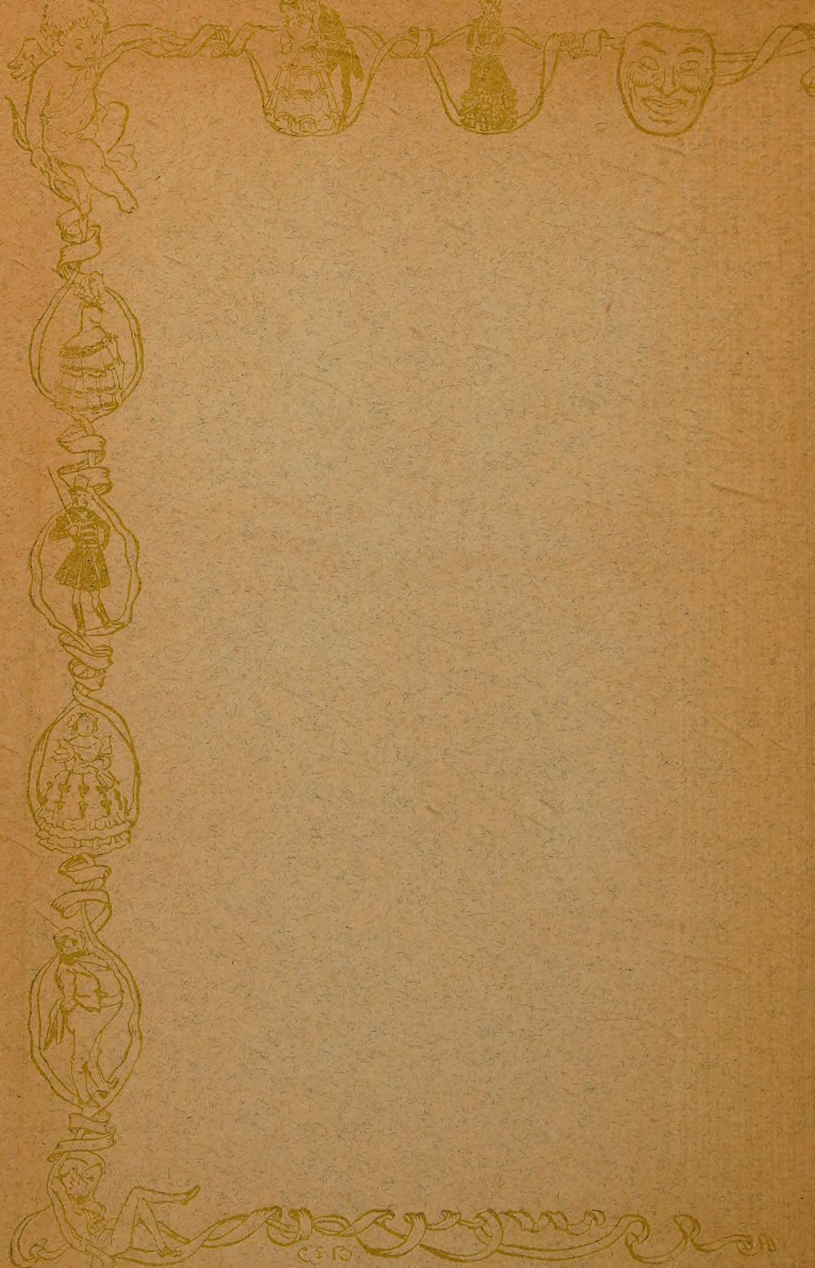

HENRY ESMOND

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. TWO

THE COLONEL FALLING BACK A STEP DROPPED HIS POINT WITH ANOTHER VERY LOW BOW, AND DECLARED HIMSELF PERFECTLY SATISFIED.

Esmond—Vol. II., Book III., Chap. XIII. [*Frontispiece*

THE PROSE WORKS
OF
WILLIAM·MAKEPEACE
THACKERAY

HENRY ESMOND

VOL. II

Edited by
WALTER JERROLD

with Illustrations by
CHARLES E BROCK

LONDON
J M DENT & CO.
1901

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CHAPTER X

AN OLD STORY ABOUT A FOOL AND A WOMAN

ANY taste for pleasure which Esmond had (and he liked to *desipere in loco*, neither more nor less than most young men of his age) he could now gratify to

the utmost extent, and in the best company which the town afforded. When the army went into winter quarters abroad, those of the officers who had interest or money easily got leave of absence, and found it much pleasanter to spend their time in Pall Mall and Hyde Park, than to pass the winter away behind the fortifications of the dreary old Flanders towns, where the English troops were gathered. Yachts and packets passed daily between the Dutch and Flemish ports and Harwich ; the roads thence to London and the great inns were crowded with army gentlemen ; the taverns and ordinaries of the town swarmed with red-coats ; and our great Duke's levées at St. James's were as thronged as they had been at Ghent and Brussels where we treated him, and he us, with the grandeur and ceremony of a sovereign. Though Esmond had been appointed to a lieutenancy in the Fusileer regiment, of which that celebrated officer, Brigadier John Richmond Webb, was colonel, he had never joined the regiment, nor been introduced to its excellent commander, though they had made the same campaign together, and been engaged in the same battle. But being aide-de-camp to General Lumley, who commanded the division of horse, and the army marching to its point of destination on the Danube by different routes, Esmond had not fallen in, as yet, with his commander and future comrades of the fort ; and it was in London, in Golden Square, where Major-General Webb lodged, that Captain Esmond had the honour of first paying his respects to his friend, patron, and commander of after days.

Those who remember this brilliant and accomplished gentleman may recollect his character, upon which he prided himself, I think, not a little, of being the handsomest man in the army ; a poet who writ a dull

copy of verses upon the battle of Oudenarde three years after, describing Webb, says :—

> 'To noble danger Webb conducts the way,
> His great example all his troops obey ;
> Before the front the General sternly rides,
> With such an air as Mars to battle strides :
> Propitious Heaven must sure a hero save,
> Like Paris handsome, and like Hector brave.'

Mr. Webb thought these verses quite as fine as Mr. Addison's on the Blenheim Campaign, and, indeed, to be Hector *à la mode de Paris* was part of this gallant gentleman's ambition. It would have been difficult to find an officer in the whole army, or amongst the splendid courtiers and cavaliers of the Maison du Roy, that fought under Vendosme and Villeroy in the army opposed to ours, who was a more accomplished soldier and perfect gentleman, and either braver or better-looking. And if Mr. Webb believed of himself what the world said of him, and was deeply convinced of his own indisputable genius, beauty, and valour, who has a right to quarrel with him very much? This self-content of his kept him in general good-humour, of which his friends and dependants got the benefit.

He came of a very ancient Wiltshire family, which he respected above all families in the world : he could prove a lineal descent from King Edward the First, and his first ancestor, Roaldus de Richmond, rode by William the Conqueror's side on Hastings field. 'We were gentlemen, Esmond,' he used to say, 'when the Churchills were horseboys.' He was a very tall man, standing in his pumps six feet three inches (in his great jack-boots, with his tall fair periwig, and hat and feather, he could not have been less than eight feet high). 'I am taller than Churchill,' he would say, surveying himself in the

glass, 'and I am a better made man; and if the women won't like a man that hasn't a wart on his nose, faith, I can't help myself, and Churchill has the better of me there.' Indeed, he was always measuring himself with the Duke, and always asking his friends to measure them. And talking in this frank way, as he would do, over his cups, wags would laugh and encourage him; friends would be sorry for him; schemers and flatterers would egg him on, and tale-bearers carry the stories to headquarters, and widen the difference which already existed there between the great captain and one of the ablest and bravest lieutenants he ever had.

His rancour against the Duke was so apparent, that one saw it in the first half-hour's conversation with General Webb; and his lady, who adored her General, and thought him a hundred times taller, handsomer, and braver than a prodigal nature had made him, hated the great Duke with such an intensity as it becomes faithful wives to feel against their husbands' enemies. Not that my Lord Duke was so yet; Mr. Webb had said a thousand things against him, which his superior had pardoned; and his Grace, whose spies were everywhere, had heard a thousand things more that Webb had never said. But it cost this great man no pains to pardon; and he passed over an injury or a benefit alike easily.

Should any child of mine take the pains to read these his ancestor's memoirs, I would not have him judge of the great Duke * by what a contemporary has written of him. No man hath been so immensely lauded and decried as this great statesman and warrior; as, indeed, no man ever deserved better the very great-

* This passage in the Memoirs of Esmond is written on a leaf inserted into the MS. book, and dated 1744, probably after he had heard of the Duchess's death.

est praise and the strongest censure. If the present writer joins with the latter faction, very likely a private pique of his own may be the cause of his ill-feeling.

On presenting himself at the Commander-in-Chief's levée, his Grace had not the least remembrance of General Lumley's aide-de-camp, and though he knew Esmond's family perfectly well, having served with both lords (my Lord Francis and the Viscount Esmond's father) in Flanders, and in the Duke of York's Guard, the Duke of Marlborough, who was friendly and serviceable to the (so-styled) legitimate representatives of the Viscount Castlewood, took no sort of notice of the poor lieutenant who bore their name. A word of kindness or acknowledgment, or a single glance of approbation, might have changed Esmond's opinion of the great man; and instead of a satire, which his pen cannot help writing, who knows but that the humble historian might have taken the other side of panegyric? We have but to change the point of view, and the greatest action looks mean: as we turn the perspective-glass, and a giant appears a pigmy. You may describe, but who can tell whether your sight is clear or not, or your means of information accurate? Had the great man said but a word of kindness to the small one (as he would have stepped out of his gilt chariot to shake hands with Lazarus in rags and sores, if he thought Lazarus could have been of any service to him), no doubt Esmond would have fought for him with pen and sword to the utmost of his might; but my lord the lion did not want master mouse at this moment, and so Muscipulus went off and nibbled in opposition.

So it was, however, that a young gentleman, who, in the eyes of his family, and in his own, doubtless, was looked upon as a consummate hero, found that the great hero of the day took no more notice of him

than of the smallest drummer in his Grace's army. The Dowager at Chelsey was furious against this neglect of her family, and had a great battle with Lady Marlborough (as Lady Castlewood insisted on calling the Duchess). Her Grace was now Mistress of the Robes to Her Majesty, and one of the greatest personages in this kingdom, as her husband was in all Europe, and the battle between the two ladies took place in the Queen's drawing-room.

The Duchess, in reply to my aunt's eager clamour, said haughtily, that she had done her best for the legitimate branch of the Esmonds, and could not be expected to provide for the bastard brats of the family.

'Bastards!' says the Viscountess, in a fury. 'There are bastards among the Churchills, as your Grace knows, and the Duke of Berwick is provided for well enough.'

'Madam,' says the Duchess, 'you know whose fault it is that there are no such dukes in the Esmond family too, and how that little scheme of a certain lady miscarried.'

Esmond's friend, Dick Steele, who was in waiting on the Prince, heard the controversy between the ladies at the Court. 'And faith,' says Dick, 'I think, Harry, thy kinswoman had the worst of it.'

He could not keep the story quiet; 'twas all over the coffee-houses ere night; it was printed in a newsletter before a month was over, and 'The Reply of her Grace the Duchess of M-rlb-r-gh to a Popish Lady of the Court, once a favourite of the late K— J-m-s,' was printed in half-a-dozen places, with a note stating that 'this Duchess, when the head of this lady's family came by his death lately in a fatal duel, never rested until she got a pension for the orphan heir, and widow, from Her Majesty's bounty.' The squabble did not advance poor Esmond's promotion much, and indeed

made him so ashamed of himself that he dared not show his face at the Commander-in-Chief's levées again.

During those eighteen months which had passed since Esmond saw his dear mistress, her good father, the old Dean, quitted this life, firm in his principles to the very last, and enjoining his family always to remember that the Queen's brother, King James the Third, was their rightful sovereign. He made a very edifying end, as his daughter told Esmond, and not a little to her surprise, after his death (for he had lived always very poorly) my Lady found that her father had left no less a sum than £3000 behind him, which he bequeathed to her.

With this little fortune Lady Castlewood was enabled, when her daughter's turn at Court came, to come to London, where she took a small genteel house at Kensington, in the neighbourhood of the Court, bringing her children with her, and here it was that Esmond found his friends.

As for the young lord, his University career had ended rather abruptly. Honest Tusher, his governor, had found my young gentleman quite ungovernable. My Lord worried his life away with tricks; and broke out, as home-bred lads will, into a hundred youthful extravagances, so that Doctor Bentley, the new Master of Trinity, thought fit to write to the Viscountess Castlewood, my Lord's mother, and beg her to remove the young nobleman from a College where he declined to learn, and where he only did harm by his riotous example. Indeed, I believe he nearly set fire to Nevil's Court, that beautiful new quadrangle of our College, which Sir Christopher Wren had lately built. He knocked down a proctor's man that wanted to arrest him in a midnight prank; he gave a dinner-party on the Prince of Wales's birthday, which

was within a fortnight of his own, and the twenty young gentlemen then present sallied out after their wine, having toasted King James's health with open windows, and sung cavalier songs, and shouted 'God save the King!' in the great court, so that the Master came out of his lodge at midnight, and dissipated the riotous assembly.

This was my Lord's crowning freak, and the Rev. Thomas Tusher, domestic chaplain to the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Castlewood, finding his prayers and sermons of no earthly avail to his Lordship, gave up his duties of governor; went and married his brewer's widow at Southampton, and took her and her money to his parsonage house at Castlewood.

My Lady could not be angry with her son for drinking King James's health, being herself a loyal Tory, as all the Castlewood family were, and acquiesced with a sigh, knowing, perhaps, that her refusal would be of no avail to the young lord's desire for a military life. She would have liked him to be in Mr. Esmond's regiment, hoping that Harry might act as a guardian and adviser to his wayward young kinsman; but my young lord would hear of nothing but the Guards, and a commission was got for him in the Duke of Ormond's regiment; so Esmond found my Lord ensign and lieutenant when he returned from Germany after the Blenheim campaign.

The effect produced by both Lady Castlewood's children when they appeared in public was extraordinary, and the whole town speedily rang with their fame: such a beautiful couple, it was declared, never had been seen; the young maid of honour was toasted at every table and tavern, and as for my young lord, his good looks were even more admired than his sister's. A hundred songs were written about the pair, and as the fashion of that day was, my young lord was praised

in these Anacreontics as warmly as Bathyllus. You may be sure that he accepted very complacently the town's opinion of him, and acquiesced with that frankness and charming good-humour he always showed in the idea that he was the prettiest fellow in all London.

The old Dowager at Chelsey, though she could never be got to acknowledge that Mistress Beatrix was any beauty at all (in which opinion, as it may be imagined, a vast number of the ladies agreed with her), yet, on the very first sight of young Castlewood, she owned she fell in love with him; and Henry Esmond, on his return to Chelsey, found himself quite superseded in her favour by her younger kinsman. The feat of drinking the King's health at Cambridge would have won her heart, she said, if nothing else did. 'How had the dear young fellow got such beauty?' she asked. 'Not from his father—certainly not from his mother. How had he come by such noble manners, and the perfect *bel air?* That countrified Walcote widow could never have taught him.' Esmond had his own opinion about the countrified Walcote widow, who had a quiet grace and serene kindness, that had always seemed to him the perfection of good breeding, though he did not try to argue this point with his aunt. But he could agree in most of the praises which the enraptured old Dowager bestowed on my Lord Viscount, than whom he never beheld a more fascinating and charming gentleman. Castlewood had not wit so much as enjoyment. 'The lad looks good things,' Mr. Steele used to say; 'and his laugh lights up a conversation as much as ten repartees from Mr. Congreve. I would as soon sit over a bottle with him as with Mr. Addison; and rather listen to his talk than hear Nicolini. Was ever man so gracefully drunk as my Lord Castlewood? I would give any-

thing to carry my wine' (though, indeed, Dick bore his very kindly, and plenty of it, too) 'like this incomparable young man. When he is sober he is delightful; and when tipsy, perfectly irresistible.' And referring to his favourite, Shakspeare (who was quite out of fashion until Steele brought him back into the mode), Dick compared Lord Castlewood to Prince Hal, and was pleased to dub Esmond as Ancient Pistol.

The Mistress of the Robes, the greatest lady in England after the Queen, or even before Her Majesty, as the world said, though she never could be got to say a civil word to Beatrix, whom she had promoted to her place as maid of honour, took her brother into instant favour. When young Castlewood, in his new uniform, and looking like a prince out of a fairy tale, went to pay his duty to her Grace, she looked at him for a minute in silence, the young man blushing and in confusion before her, then fairly burst out a-crying, and kissed him before her daughters and company. 'He was my boy's friend,' she said, through her sobs. 'My Blandford might have been like him.' And everybody saw, after this mark of the Duchess's favour, that my young Lord's promotion was secure, and people crowded round the favourite's favourite, who became vainer and gayer, and more good-humoured than ever.

Meanwhile Madame Beatrix was making her conquests on her own side, and amongst them was one poor gentleman, who had been shot by her young eyes two years before, and had never been quite cured of that wound; he knew, to be sure, how hopeless any passion might be, directed in that quarter, and had taken that best, though ignoble, *remedium amoris*, a speedy retreat from before the charmer, and a long absence from her; and not being dangerously smitten

in the first instance, Esmond pretty soon got the better of his complaint, and if he had it still, did not know he had it, and bore it easily. But when he returned after Blenheim, the young lady of sixteen, who had appeared the most beautiful object his eyes had ever looked on two years back, was now advanced to a perfect ripeness and perfection of beauty, such as instantly enthralled the poor devil, who had already been a fugitive from her charms. Then he had seen her but for two days, and fled; now he beheld her day after day, and when she was at Court watched after her; when she was at home, made one of the family party; when she went abroad, rode after her mother's chariot; when she appeared in public places, was in the box near her, or in the pit looking at her; when she went to church was sure to be there, though he might not listen to the sermon, and be ready to hand her to her chair if she deigned to accept of his services, and select him from a score of young men who were always hanging round about her. When she went away, accompanying Her Majesty to Hampton Court, a darkness fell over London. Gods, what nights has Esmond passed, thinking of her, rhyming about her, talking about her! His friend Dick Steele was at this time courting the young lady, Mrs. Scurlock, whom he married; she had a lodging in Kensington Square, hard by my Lady Castlewood's house there. Dick and Harry, being on the same errand, used to meet constantly at Kensington. They were always prowling about that place, or dismally walking thence, or eagerly running thither. They emptied scores of bottles at the 'King's Arms,' each man prating of his love, and allowing the other to talk on condition that he might have his own turn as a listener. Hence arose an intimacy between them, though to all the rest of their friends they must have

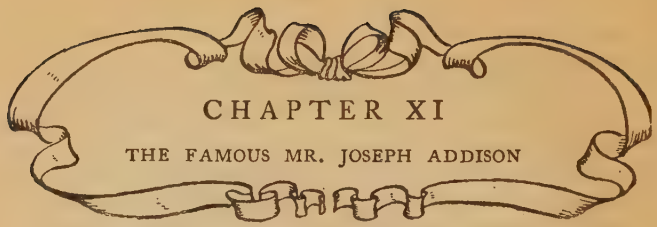
been insufferable. Esmond's verses to 'Gloriana at the Harpsichord,' to 'Gloriana's Nosegay,' to 'Gloriana at Court,' appeared this year in the *Observator*.—Have you never read them? They were thought pretty poems, and attributed by some to Mr. Prior.

This passion did not escape—how should it?—the clear eyes of Esmond's mistress: he told her all; what will a man not do when frantic with love? To what baseness will he not demean himself? What pangs will he not make others suffer, so that he may ease his selfish heart of a part of its own pain? Day after day he would seek his dear mistress, pour insane hopes, supplications, rhapsodies, raptures, into her ear. She listened, smiled, consoled, with untiring pity and sweetness. Esmond was the eldest of her children, so she was pleased to say; and as for her kindness, who ever had or would look for aught else from one who was an angel of goodness and pity? After what has been said, 'tis needless almost to add that poor Esmond's suit was unsuccessful. What was a nameless, penniless lieutenant to do, when some of the greatest in the land were in the field? Esmond never so much as thought of asking permission to hope so far above his reach as he knew this prize was—and passed his foolish, useless life in mere abject sighs and impotent longing. What nights of rage, what days of torment, of passionate unfulfilled desire, of sickening jealousy can he recall! Beatrix thought no more of him than of the lacquey that followed her chair. His complaints did not touch her in the least; his raptures rather fatigued her; she cared for his verses no more than for Dan Chaucer's, who's dead these ever so many hundred years; she did not hate him; she rather despised him, and just suffered him.

One day, after talking to Beatrix's mother, his

dear, fond constant mistress—for hours—for all day long—pouring out his flame and his passion, his despair and rage, returning again and again to the theme, pacing the room, tearing up the flowers on the table, twisting and breaking into bits the wax out of the stand-dish, and performing a hundred mad freaks of passionate folly; seeing his mistress at last quite pale and tired out with sheer weariness of compassion, and watching over his fever for the hundredth time, Esmond seized up his hat and took his leave. As he got into Kensington Square, a sense of remorse came over him for the wearisome pain he had been inflicting upon the dearest and kindest friend ever man had. He went back to the house, where the servant still stood at the open door, ran up the stairs, and found his mistress where he had left her in the embrasure of the window, looking over the fields towards Chelsey. She laughed, wiping away at the same time the tears which were in her kind eyes; he flung himself down on his knees, and buried his head in her lap. She had in her hand the stalk of one of the flowers, a pink, that he had torn to pieces. 'Oh, pardon me, pardon me, my dearest and kindest,' he said; 'I am in hell, and you are the angel that brings me a drop of water.'

'I am your mother, you are my son, and I love you always,' she said, holding her hands over him: and he went away comforted and humbled in mind, as he thought of that amazing and constant love and tenderness with which this sweet lady ever blessed and pursued him.



CHAPTER XI

THE FAMOUS MR. JOSEPH ADDISON

THE gentlemen-ushers had a table at Kensington and the Guard a very splendid dinner daily at St. James's, at either of which ordinaries Esmond was free to dine. Dick Steele liked the Guard table better than his own at the gentlemen-ushers', where there was less wine and more ceremony ; and Esmond had many a jolly afternoon in company of his friend, and a hundred times at least saw Dick into his chair. If there is verity in wine, according to the old adage, what an amiable-natured character Dick's must have been ! In proportion as he took in wine he overflowed with kindness. His talk was not witty so much as charming. He never said a word that could anger anybody, and only became the more benevolent the more tipsy he grew. Many of the wags derided the poor fellow in his cups, and chose him as a butt for their satire : but there was a kindness about him, and a sweet playful fancy, that seemed to Esmond far more charming than the pointed talk of the brightest wits with their elaborate repartees and affected severities. I think Steele shone rather than sparkled. Those famous *beaux-esprits* of the coffee-houses (Mr. William Congreve, for instance, when his gout and his grandeur permitted him to come among us) would make many brilliant hits—half-a-dozen in a night sometimes—but, like sharpshooters, when they had fired their shot, they were obliged to retire under cover till their pieces were loaded again, and wait till they got

another chance at their enemy; whereas Dick never thought that his bottle companion was a butt to aim at—only a friend to shake by the hand. The poor fellow had half the town in his confidence; everybody knew everything about his loves and his debts, his creditors or his mistress' obduracy. When Esmond first came on to the town, honest Dick was all flames and raptures for a young lady, a West India fortune, whom he married. In a couple of years the lady was dead, the fortune was all but spent, and the honest widower was as eager in pursuit of a new paragon of beauty as if he had never courted and married and buried the last one.

Quitting the Guard table one Sunday afternoon, when by chance Dick had a sober fit upon him, he and his friend were making their way down Germain Street, and Dick all of a sudden left his companion's arm, and ran after a gentleman who was poring over a folio volume at the book-shop near to St. James's Church. He was a fair, tall man, in a snuff-coloured suit, with a plain sword, very sober, and almost shabby in appearance—at least when compared to Captain Steele, who loved to adorn his jolly round person with the finest of clothes, and shone in scarlet and gold lace. The Captain rushed up, then, to the student of the book-stall, took him in his arms, hugged him, and would have kissed him—for Dick was always hugging and bussing his friends—but the other stepped back with a flush on his pale face, seeming to decline this public manifestation of Steele's regard.

'My dearest Joe, where hast thou hidden thyself this age?' cries the Captain, still holding both his friend's hands; 'I have been languishing for thee this fortnight.

'A fortnight is not an age, Dick,' says the other, very good-humouredly. (He had light-blue eyes,

extraordinary bright, and a face perfectly regular and handsome, like a tinted statue.) 'And I have been hiding myself—where do you think?'

'What! not across the water, my dear Joe?' says Steele, with a look of great alarm: 'thou knowest I have always'——

'No,' says his friend, interrupting him with a smile: 'we are not come to such straits as that, Dick. I have been hiding, sir, at a place where people never think of finding you—at my own lodgings, whither I am going to smoke a pipe now and drink a glass of sack: will your honour come?'

'Harry Esmond, come hither,' cries out Dick. 'Thou hast heard me talk over and over again of my dearest Joe, my guardian angel?'

'Indeed,' says Mr. Esmond, with a bow, 'it is not from you only that I have learnt to admire Mr. Addison. We loved good poetry at Cambridge as well as at Oxford; and I have some of yours by heart, though I have put on a red coat. . . . "O qui canoro blandius Orpheo vocale ducis carmen;" shall I go on, sir?' says Mr. Esmond, who, indeed, had read and loved the charming Latin poems of Mr. Addison, as every scholar of that time knew and admired them.

'This is Captain Esmond, who was at Blenheim,' says Steele.

'Lieutenant Esmond,' says the other, with a low bow, 'at Mr. Addison's service.'

'I have heard of you,' says Mr. Addison, with a smile; as, indeed, everybody about town had heard that unlucky story about Esmond's dowager aunt and the Duchess.

'We were going to the "George" to take a bottle before the play,' says Steele: 'wilt thou be one, Joe?'

Mr. Addison said his own lodgings were hard by,

'MY DEAREST JOE, WHERE HAST THOU HIDDEN THYSELF THIS AGE?'
Esmond—Vol. II., Book II., Chap. XI.

where he was still rich enough to give a good bottle of wine to his friends; and invited the two gentlemen to his apartment in the Haymarket, whither we accordingly went.

'I shall get credit with my landlady,' says he, with a smile, 'when she sees two such fine gentlemen as you come up my stair.' And he politely made his visitors welcome to his apartment, which was indeed but a shabby one, though no grandee of the land could receive his guests with a more perfect and courtly grace than this gentleman. A frugal dinner, consisting of a slice of meat and a penny loaf, was awaiting the owner of the lodgings. 'My wine is better than my meat,' says Mr. Addison; 'my Lord Halifax sent me the Burgundy.' And he set a bottle and glasses before his friends, and ate his simple dinner in a very few minutes, after which the three fell to and began to drink. 'You see,' says Mr. Addison, pointing to his writing-table, whereon was a map of the action at Hochstedt, and several other gazettes and pamphlets relating to the battle, 'that I, too, am busy about your affairs, Captain. I am engaged as a poetical gazetteer, to say truth, and am writing a poem on the campaign.'

So Esmond, at the request of his host, told him what he knew about the famous battle, drew the river on the table *aliquo mero*, and with the aid of some bits of tobacco-pipe, showed the advance of the left wing, where he had been engaged.

A sheet or two of the verses lay already on the table beside our bottles and glasses, and Dick having plentifully refreshed himself from the latter, took up the pages of manuscript, writ out with scarce a blot or correction, in the author's slim, neat handwriting, and began to read therefrom with great emphasis and volubility. At pauses of the verse, the enthusi-

astic reader stopped and fired off a great salvo of applause.

Esmond smiled at the enthusiasm of Addison's friend. 'You are like the German Burghers,' says he, 'and the Princes on the Mozelle: when our army came to a halt, they always sent a deputation to compliment the chief, and fired a salute with all their artillery from their walls.'

'And drunk the great chief's health afterward, did not they?' says Captain Steele, gaily filling up a bumper;—he never was tardy at that sort of acknowledgment of a friend's merit.

'And the Duke, since you will have me act his Grace's part,' says Mr. Addison, with a smile, and something of a blush, 'pledged his friends in return. Most Serene Elector of Covent Garden, I drink to your Highness's health,' and he filled himself a glass. Joseph required scarce more pressing than Dick to that sort of amusement; but the wine never seemed at all to fluster Mr. Addison's brains; it only unloosed his tongue: whereas Captain Steele's head and speech were quite overcome by a single bottle.

No matter what the verses were, and, to say truth, Mr. Esmond found some of them more than indifferent, Dick's enthusiasm for his chief never faltered, and in every line from Addison's pen Steele found a masterstroke. By the time Dick had come to that part of the poem wherein the bard describes as blandly as though he were recording a dance at the opera, or a harmless bout of bucolic cudgelling at a village fair, that bloody and ruthless part of our campaign, with the remembrance whereof every soldier who bore a part in it must sicken with shame—when we were ordered to ravage and lay waste the Elector's country; and with fire and murder, slaughter and crime, a great part of his dominions was overrun;—when Dick came to the lines—

'In vengeance roused the soldier fills his hand
With sword and fire, and ravages the land,
In crackling flames a thousand harvests burn,
A thousand villages to ashes turn.
To the thick woods the woolly flocks retreat,
And mixed with bellowing herds confusedly bleat.
Their trembling lords the common shade partake,
And cries of infants sound in every brake.
The listening soldier fixed in sorrow stands,
Loth to obey his leader's just commands.
The leader grieves, by generous pity swayed,
To see his just commands so well obeyed;'—

by this time wine and friendship had brought poor Dick to a perfectly maudlin state, and he hiccupped out the last line with a tenderness that set one of his auditors a-laughing.

'I admire the license of your poets,' says Esmond to Mr. Addison. (Dick, after reading of the verses, was fain to go off, insisting on kissing his two dear friends before his departure, and reeling away with his periwig over his eyes.) 'I admire your art: the murder of the campaign is done to military music, like a battle at the opera, and the virgins shriek in harmony as our victorious grenadiers march into their villages. Do you know what a scene it was?'—(by this time, perhaps, the wine had warmed Mr. Esmond's head too)—'what a triumph you are celebrating? what scenes of shame and horror were enacted, over which the commander's genius presided, as calm as though he didn't belong to our sphere? You talk of the "listening soldier fixed in sorrow," the "leader's grief swayed by generous pity:" to my belief the "leader cared no more for bleating flocks than he did for infants' cries, and many of our ruffians butchered one or the other with equal alacrity. I was ashamed of my trade when I saw those horrors perpetrated which came under

every man's eyes. You hew out of your polished verses a stately image of smiling victory! I tell you 'tis an uncouth, distorted, savage idol; hideous, bloody, and barbarous. The rites performed before it are shocking to think of. You great poets should show it as it is—ugly and horrible, not beautiful and serene. Oh, sir, had you made the campaign, believe me, you never would have sung it so.'

During this little outbreak, Mr. Addison was listening, smoking out of his long pipe, and smiling very placidly. 'What would you have?' says he. 'In our polished days, and according to the rules of art, 'tis impossible that the Muse should depict tortures or begrime her hands with the horrors of war. These are indicated rather than described; as in the Greek tragedies, that, I daresay, you have read (and sure there can be no more elegant specimens of composition), Agamemnon is slain, or Medea's children destroyed, away from the scene;—the chorus occupying the stage and singing of the action to pathetic music. Something of this I attempt, my dear sir, in my humble way: 'tis a panegyric I mean to write, and not a satire. Were I to sing as you would have me, the town would tear the poet in pieces, and burn his book by the hands of the common hangman. Do you not use tobacco? Of all the weeds grown on earth, sure the nicotian is the most soothing and salutary. We must paint our great Duke,' Mr. Addison went on, 'not as a man, which no doubt he is, with weaknesses like the rest of us, but as a hero. 'Tis in a triumph, not a battle, that your humble servant is riding his sleek Pegasus. We College poets trot, you know, on very easy nags; it hath been, time out of mind, part of the poet's profession to celebrate the actions of heroes in verse, and to sing the deeds which you men of war perform. I must follow the rules of my art,

and the composition of such a strain as this must be harmonious and majestic, not familiar, or too near the vulgar truth. Si parva licet: if Virgil could invoke the divine Augustus, a humbler poet from the banks of the Isis may celebrate a victory and a conqueror of our own nation, in whose triumphs every Briton has a share, and whose glory and genius contributes to every citizen's individual honour. When hath there been, since our Henrys' and Edwards' days, such a great feat of arms as that from which you yourself have brought away marks of distinction? If 'tis in my power to sing that song worthily, I will do so, and be thankful to my Muse. If I fail as a poet, as a Briton at least I will show my loyalty, and fling up my cap and huzzah for the conqueror:

> '"... Rheni pacator et Istri,
> Omnis in hoc uno variis discordia cessit
> Ordinibus: lætatur eques, plauditque senator,
> Votaque patricio certant plebeia favori."'

'There were as brave men on that field,' says Mr. Esmond (who never could be made to love the Duke of Marlborough, nor to forget those stories which he used to hear in his youth regarding that great chief's selfishness and treachery)—'There were men at Blenheim as good as the leader, whom neither knights nor senators applauded, nor voices plebeian or patrician favoured, and who lie there forgotten, under the clods. What poet is there to sing them?'

'To sing the gallant souls of heroes sent to Hades!' says Mr. Addison, with a smile. 'Would you celebrate them all? If I may venture to question anything in such an admirable work, the catalogue of the ships in Homer hath always appeared to me as somewhat wearisome: what had the poem been, supposing

the writer had chronicled the names of captains, lieutenants, rank and file? One of the greatest of a great man's qualities is success; 'tis the result of all the others; 'tis a latent power in him which compels the favour of the gods, and subjugates fortune. Of all his gifts I admire that one in the great Marlborough. To be brave? every man is brave. But in being victorious, as he is, I fancy there is something divine. In presence of the occasion, the great soul of the leader shines out, and the god is confessed. Death itself respects him, and passes by him to lay others low. War and carnage flee before him to ravage other parts of the field, as Hector from before the divine Achilles. You say he hath no pity: no more have the gods, who are above it, and super-human. The fainting battle gathers strength at his aspect; and, wherever he rides, victory charges with him.'

A couple of days after, when Mr. Esmond revisited his poetic friend, he found this thought, struck out in the fervour of conversation, improved and shaped into those famous lines, which are in truth the noblest in the poem of the 'Campaign.' As the two gentlemen sat engaged in talk, Mr. Addison solacing himself with his customary pipe, the little maid-servant that waited on his lodging came up, preceding a gentleman in fine laced clothes, that had evidently been figuring at Court or a great man's levée. The courtier coughed a little at the smoke of the pipe, and looked round the room curiously, which was shabby enough, as was the owner in his worn snuff-coloured suit and plain tie-wig.

'How goes on the magnum opus, Mr. Addison?' says the Court gentleman, on looking down at the papers that were on the table.

'We were but now over it,' says Addison (the greatest courtier in the land could not have a more

splendid politeness, or greater dignity of manner). 'Here is the plan,' says he, 'on the table: hâc ibat Simois, here ran the little river Nebel: hic est Sigeia tellus, here are Tallard's quarters, at the bowl of this pipe, at the attack of which Captain Esmond was present. I have the honour to introduce him to Mr. Boyle; and Mr. Esmond was but now depicting aliquo prœlia mixta mero, when you came in.' In truth, the two gentlemen had been so engaged when the visitor arrived, and Addison in his smiling way speaking of Mr. Webb, colonel of Esmond's regiment (who commanded a brigade in the action, and greatly distinguished himself there), was lamenting that he could find never a suitable rhyme for Webb, otherwise the brigade should have had a place in the poet's verses. 'And for you, you are but a lieutenant,' says Addison, 'and the Muse can't occupy herself with any gentleman under the rank of a field officer.'

Mr. Boyle was all impatient to hear, saying that my Lord Treasurer and my Lord Halifax were equally anxious; and Addison, blushing, began reading of his verses, and, I suspect, knew their weak parts as well as the most critical hearer. When he came to the lines describing the angel that

> 'Inspired repulsed battalions to engage,
> And taught the doubtful battle where to rage,'

he read with great animation, looking at Esmond, as much as to say, 'You know where that simile came from—from our talk, and our bottle of Burgundy, the other day.'

The poet's two hearers were caught with enthusiasm, and applauded the verses with all their might. The gentleman of the Court sprang up in great delight. 'Not a word more, my dear sir,' says he. 'Trust me

with the papers—I'll defend them with my life. Let me read them over to my Lord Treasurer, whom I am appointed to see in half-an-hour. I venture to promise, the verses shall lose nothing by my reading, and then, sir, we shall see whether Lord Halifax has a right to complain that his friend's pension is no longer paid.' And without more ado, the courtier in lace seized the manuscript pages, placed them in his breast with his ruffled hand over his heart, executed a most gracious wave of the hat with the disengaged hand, and smiled and bowed out of the room, leaving an odour of pomander behind him.

'Does not the chamber look quite dark?' says Addison, surveying it, 'after the glorious appearance and disappearance of that gracious messenger? Why, he illuminated the whole room. Your scarlet, Mr. Esmond, will bear any light; but this threadbare old coat of mine, how very worn it looked under the glare of that splendour! I wonder whether they will do anything for me,' he continued. 'When I came out of Oxford into the world, my patrons promised me great things; and you see where their promises have landed me, in a lodging up two pair of stairs, with a sixpenny dinner from the cook's shop. Well, I suppose this promise will go after the others, and fortune will jilt me, as the jade has been doing any time these seven years. "I puff the prostitute away,"' says he, smiling, and blowing a cloud out of his pipe. 'There is no hardship in poverty, Esmond, that is not bearable; no hardship even in honest dependence that an honest man may not put up with. I came out of the lap of Alma Mater, puffed up with her praises of me, and thinking to make a figure in the world with the parts and learning which had got me no small name in our College. The world is the ocean, and Isis and Charwell are but little drops, of which the sea takes no

account. My reputation ended a mile beyond Maudlin Tower; no one took note of me; and I learned this at least, to bear up against evil fortune with a cheerful heart. Friend Dick hath made a figure in the world, and has passed me in the race long ago. What matters a little name or a little fortune? There is no fortune that a philosopher cannot endure. I have been not unknown as a scholar, and yet forced to live by turning bear-leader, and teaching a boy to spell. What then? The life was not pleasant, but possible—the bear was bearable. Should this venture fail, I will go back to Oxford: and some day, when you are a general, you shall find me a curate in a cassock and bands, and I shall welcome your honour to my cottage in the country, and to a mug of penny ale. 'Tis not poverty that's the hardest to bear, or the least happy lot in life,' says Mr. Addison, shaking the ash out of his pipe. 'See, my pipe is smoked out. Shall we have another bottle? I have still a couple in the cupboard, and of the right sort. No more? Let us go abroad and take a turn on the Mall, or look in at the theatre and see Dick's comedy. 'Tis not a masterpiece of wit; but Dick is a good fellow, though he doth not set the Thames on fire.'

Within a month after this day, Mr. Addison's ticket had come up a prodigious prize in the lottery of life. All the town was in an uproar of admiration of his poem, the 'Campaign,' which Dick Steele was spouting at every coffee-house in Whitehall and Covent Garden. The wits on the other side of Temple Bar saluted him at once as the greatest poet the world had seen for ages; the people huzzahed for Marlborough and for Addison, and, more than this, the party in power provided for the meritorious poet, and Mr. Addison got the appointment of Commissioner of Excise, which the famous Mr. Locke

vacated, and rose from this place to other dignities and honours; his prosperity from henceforth to the end of his life being scarce ever interrupted. But I doubt whether he was not happier in his garret in the Haymarket, than ever he was in his splendid palace at Kensington; and I believe the fortune that came to him in the shape of the countess his wife, was no better than a shrew and a vixen.

Gay as the town was, 'twas but a dreary place for Mr. Esmond, whether his charmer was in or out of it, and he was glad when his General gave him notice that he was going back to his division of the army, which lay in winter quarters at Bois-le-Duc. His dear mistress bade him farewell with a cheerful face; her blessing he knew he had always, and wheresoever fate carried him. Mistress Beatrix was away in attendance on Her Majesty at Hampton Court, and kissed her fair finger-tips to him, by way of adieu, when he rode thither to take his leave. She received her kinsman in a waiting-room where there were half-a-dozen more ladies of the Court, so that his high-flown speeches, had he intended to make any (and very likely he did), were impossible; and she announced to her friends that her cousin was going to the army, in as easy a manner as she would have said he was going to a chocolate-house. He asked with a rather rueful face if she had any orders for the army? and she was pleased to say that she would like a mantle of Mechlin lace. She made him a saucy curtsey in reply to his own dismal bow. She deigned to kiss her finger-tips from the window, where she stood laughing with the other ladies, and chanced to see him as he made his way to the 'Toy.' The Dowager at Chelsey was not sorry to part with him this time. 'Mon cher, vous êtes triste comme un

sermon,' she did him the honour to say to him; indeed, gentlemen in his condition are by no means amusing companions, and besides, the fickle old woman had now found a much more amiable favourite, and *raffol'd* for her darling lieutenant of the Guard. Frank remained behind for a while, and did not join the army till later, in the suite of his Grace the Commander-in-Chief. His dear mother, on the last day before Esmond went away, and when the three dined together, made Esmond promise to befriend her boy, and besought Frank to take the example of his kinsman as of a loyal gentleman and brave soldier, so she was pleased to say; and at parting, betrayed not the least sign of faltering or weakness, though, God knows, that fond heart was fearful enough when others were concerned, though so resolute in bearing its own pain.

Esmond's General embarked at Harwich. 'Twas a grand sight to see Mr. Webb dressed in scarlet on the deck, waving his hat as our yacht put off, and the guns saluted from the shore. Harry did not see his Viscount again, until three months after, at Bois-le-Duc, when his Grace the Duke came to take the command, and Frank brought a budget of news from home: how he had supped with this actress, and got tired of that; how he had got the better of Mr. St. John, both over the bottle, and with Mrs. Mountford, of the Haymarket Theatre (a veteran charmer of fifty, with whom the young scapegrace chose to fancy himself in love); how his sister was always at her tricks, and had jilted a young baron for an old earl. 'I can't make out Beatrix,' he said; 'she cares for none of us—she only thinks about herself; she is never happy unless she is quarrelling; but as for my mother—my mother, Harry, is an angel.' Harry tried to impress on the young fellow the necessity of doing everything in his

power to please that angel: not to drink too much; not to go into debt; not to run after the pretty Flemish girls, and so forth, as became a senior speaking to a lad. 'But Lord bless thee!' the boy said; 'I may do what I like, and I know she will love me all the same;' and so, indeed, he did what he liked. Everybody spoiled him, and his grave kinsman as much as the rest.

CHAPTER XII

I GET A COMPANY IN THE CAMPAIGN OF 1706

On Whit Sunday, the famous 23d of May, 1706, my young lord first came under the fire of the enemy, whom we found posted in order of battle, their lines extending three miles or more, over the high ground behind the little Gheet river, and having on his left the little village of Anderkirk or Autre-église, and on his right Ramillies, which has given its name to one of the most brilliant and disastrous days of battle that history ever hath recorded.

Our Duke here once more met his old enemy of Blenheim, the Bavarian Elector and the Maréchal Villeroy, over whom the Prince of Savoy had gained the famous victory of Chiari. What Englishman or Frenchman doth not know the issue of that day? Having chosen his own ground, having a force superior to the English, and besides the excellent Spanish and Bavarian troops, the whole Maison-du-Roy with him, the most splendid body of horse in the world,—in an hour (and in spite of the prodigious gallantry of the French Royal Household, who charged through the centre of our line and broke it) this magnificent army of Villeroy was utterly routed by troops that had been marching

for twelve hours, and by the intrepid skill of a commander who did, indeed, seem in the presence of the enemy to be the very Genius of Victory.

I think it was more from conviction than policy, though that policy was surely the most prudent in the world, that the great Duke always spoke of his victories with an extraordinary modesty, and as if it was not so much his own admirable genius and courage which achieved these amazing successes, but as if he was a special and fatal instrument in the hands of Providence, that willed irresistibly the enemy's overthrow. Before his actions he always had the Church service read solemnly, and professed an undoubting belief that our Queen's arms were blessed and our victory sure. All the letters which he writ after his battles show awe rather than exultation; and he attributes the glory of these achievements, about which I have heard mere petty officers and men bragging with a pardonable vain-glory, in nowise to his own bravery or skill, but to the superintending protection of Heaven, which he ever seemed to think was our special ally. And our army got to believe so, and the enemy learnt to think so too; for we never entered into a battle without a perfect confidence that it was to end in a victory; nor did the French, after the issue of Blenheim, and that astonishing triumph of Ramillies, ever meet us without feeling that the game was lost before it was begun to be played, and that our General's fortune was irresistible. Here, as at Blenheim, the Duke's charger was shot, and 'twas thought for a moment he was dead. As he mounted another, Binfield, his master of the horse, kneeling to hold his Grace's stirrup, had his head shot away by a cannon-ball. A French gentleman of the Royal Household, that was a prisoner with us, told the writer that at the time of the charge of the Household, when

their horse and ours were mingled, an Irish officer recognised the Prince-Duke, and calling out 'Marlborough, Marlborough!' fired his pistol at him *à bout-portant*, and that a score more carbines and pistols were discharged at him. Not one touched him: he rode through the French Cuirassiers sword in hand, and entirely unhurt, and calm and smiling, rallied the German Horse, that was reeling before the enemy, brought these and twenty squadrons of Orkney's back upon them, and drove the French across the river, again leading the charge himself, and defeating the only dangerous move the French made that day.

Major-General Webb commanded on the left of our line, and had his own regiment under the orders of their beloved colonel. Neither he nor they belied their character for gallantry on this occasion; but it was about his dear young lord that Esmond was anxious, never having sight of him save once, in the whole course of the day, when he brought an order from the Commander-in-Chief to Mr. Webb. When our horse, having charged round the right flank of the enemy by Overkirk, had thrown him into entire confusion, a general advance was made, and our whole line of foot, crossing the little river and the morass, ascended the high ground where the French were posted, cheering as they went, the enemy retreating before them. 'Twas a service of more glory than danger, the French battalions never waiting to exchange push of pike or bayonet with ours; and the gunners flying from their pieces, which our line left behind us as they advanced, and the French fell back.

At first it was a retreat orderly enough; but presently the retreat became a rout, and a frightful slaughter of the French ensued on this panic: so that an army of sixty thousand men was utterly crushed and destroyed

in the course of a couple of hours. It was as if a hurricane had seized a compact numerous fleet, flung it all to the winds, shattered, sunk, and annihilated it: *afflavit Deus, et dissipati sunt.* The French army of Flanders was gone; their artillery, their standards, their treasure, provisions, and ammunition were all left behind them: the poor devils had even fled without their soup-kettles, which are as much the palladia of the French infantry as of the Grand Seignior's Janissaries, and round which they rally even more than round their lilies.

The pursuit, and a dreadful carnage which ensued (for the dregs of a battle, however brilliant, are ever a base residue of rapine, cruelty, and drunken plunder), was carried far beyond the field of Ramillies.

Honest Lockwood, Esmond's servant, no doubt wanted to be among the marauders himself and take his share of the booty; for when, the action over, and the troops got to their ground for the night, the Captain bade Lockwood get a horse, he asked, with a very rueful countenance, whether his honour would have him come too; but his honour only bade him go about his own business, and Jack hopped away quite delighted as soon as he saw his master mounted. Esmond made his way, and not without danger and difficulty, to his Grace's headquarters, and found for himself very quickly where the aide-de-camps' quarters were, in an outbuilding of a farm, where several of these gentlemen were seated, drinking and singing, and at supper. If he had any anxiety about his boy, 'twas relieved at once. One of the gentlemen was singing a song to a tune that Mr. Farquhar and Mr. Gay both had used in their admirable comedies, and very popular in the army of that day; and after the song came a chorus, 'Over the hills and far away;' and Esmond heard Frank's fresh voice, soaring, as it

were, over the songs of the rest of the young men—a voice that had always a certain artless, indescribable pathos with it, and indeed which caused Mr. Esmond's eyes to fill with tears now, out of thankfulness to God the child was safe and still alive to laugh and sing.

When the song was over Esmond entered the room, where he knew several of the gentlemen present, and there sat my young lord, having taken off his cuirass, his waistcoat open, his face flushed, his long yellow hair hanging over his shoulders, drinking with the rest; the youngest, gayest, handsomest there. As soon as he saw Esmond, he clapped down his glass, and running towards his friend, put both his arms round him and embraced him. The other's voice trembled with joy as he greeted the lad; he had thought but now as he stood in the courtyard under the clear-shining moonlight: 'Great God! what a scene of murder is here within a mile of us; what hundreds and thousands have faced danger to-day; and here are these lads singing over their cups, and the same moon that is shining over yonder horrid field is looking down on Walcote very likely, while my Lady sits and thinks about her boy that is at the war.' As Esmond embraced his young pupil now, 'twas with the feeling of quite religious thankfulness and an almost paternal pleasure that he beheld him.

Round his neck was a star with a striped ribbon, that was made of small brilliants and might be worth a hundred crowns. 'Look,' says he, 'won't that be a pretty present for mother?'

'Who gave you the Order?' says Harry, saluting the gentleman: 'did you win it in battle?'

'I won it,' cried the other, 'with my sword and my spear. There was a mousquetaire that had it round his neck—such a big mousquetaire, as big as General Webb. I called out to him to surrender, and that I'd

give him quarter: he called me a *petit polisson* and fired his pistol at me, and then sent it at my head with a curse. I rode at him, sir, drove my sword right under his armhole, and broke it in the rascal's body. I found a purse in his holster with sixty-five Louis in it, and a bundle of love-letters, and a flask of Hungary-water. *Vive la guerre!* there are the ten pieces you lent me. I should like to have a fight every day;' and he pulled at his little moustache and bade a servant bring a supper to Captain Esmond.

Harry fell to with a very good appetite: he had tasted nothing since twenty hours ago, at early dawn. Master Grandson, who read this, do you look for the history of battles and sieges? Go, find them in the proper books; this is only the story of your grandfather and his family. Far more pleasant to him than the victory, though for that too he may say *meminisse juvat*, it was to find that the day was over, and his dear young Castlewood was unhurt.

And would you, sirrah, wish to know how it was that a sedate Captain of Foot, a studious and rather solitary bachelor of eight or nine and twenty years of age, who did not care very much for the jollities which his comrades engaged in, and was never known to lose his heart in any garrison-town—should you wish to know why such a man had so prodigious a tenderness, and tended so fondly a boy of eighteen, wait, my good friend, until thou art in love with thy schoolfellow's sister, and then see how mighty tender thou wilt be towards him. Esmond's General and his Grace the Prince-Duke were notoriously at variance, and the former's friendship was in nowise likely to advance any man's promotion of whose services Webb spoke well; but rather likely to injure him, so the army said, in the favour of the greater man. However, Mr. Esmond had the good fortune to be mentioned

very advantageously by Major-General Webb in his report after the action ; and the major of his regiment and two of the captains having been killed upon the day of Ramillies, Esmond, who was second of the lieutenants, got his company, and had the honour of serving as Captain Esmond in the next campaign.

My Lord went home in the winter, but Esmond was afraid to follow him. His dear mistress wrote him letters more than once, thanking him, as mothers know how to thank, for his care and protection of her boy, extolling Esmond's own merits with a great deal more praise than they deserved ; for he did his duty no better than any other officer ; and speaking sometimes, though gently and cautiously, of Beatrix. News came from home of at least half-a-dozen grand matches that the beautiful maid of honour was about to make. She was engaged to an earl, our gentlemen of St. James's said, and then jilted him for a duke, who, in his turn, had drawn off. Earl or duke it might be who should win this Helen, Esmond knew she would never bestow herself on a poor captain. Her conduct, it was clear, was little satisfactory to her mother, who scarcely mentioned her, or else the kind lady thought it was best to say nothing, and leave time to work out its cure. At any rate, Harry was best away from the fatal object which always wrought him so much mischief ; and so he never asked for leave to go home, but remained with his regiment that was garrisoned in Brussels, which city fell into our hands when the victory of Ramillies drove the French out of Flanders.

CHAPTER XIII

I MEET AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE IN FLANDERS

BEING one day in the Church of St. Gudule, at Brussels, admiring the antique splendour of the architecture (and always entertaining a great tenderness and reverence for the Mother Church, that hath been as wickedly persecuted in England as ever she herself persecuted in the days of her prosperity), Esmond saw kneeling at a side altar an officer in a green uniform coat, very deeply engaged in devotion. Something familiar in the figure and posture of the kneeling man struck Captain Esmond, even before he saw the officer's face. As he rose up, putting away into his pocket a little black breviary, such as priests use, Esmond beheld a countenance so like that of his friend and tutor of early days, Father Holt, that he broke out into an exclamation of astonishment and advanced a step towards the gentleman, who was making his way out of church. The German officer too looked surprised when he saw Esmond, and his face from being pale grew suddenly red. By this mark of recognition the Englishman knew that he could not be mistaken; and though the other did not stop, but on the contrary rather hastily walked away towards the door, Esmond pursued him and faced him once more, as the officer, helping himself to holy water, turned mechanically towards the altar, to bow to it ere he quitted the sacred edifice.

'My Father!' says Esmond in English.

'Silence! I do not understand. I do not speak English,' says the other in Latin.

Esmond smiled at this sign of confusion, and replied in the same language, 'I should know my Father in any garment, black or white, shaven or bearded;' for the Austrian officer was habited quite in the military manner, and had as warlike a mustachio as any Pandour.

He laughed—we were on the church steps by this time, passing through the crowd of beggars that usually is there holding up little trinkets for sale and whining for alms. 'You speak Latin,' says he, 'in the English way, Harry Esmond; you have forsaken the old true Roman tongue you once knew.' His tone was very frank, and friendly quite; the kind voice of fifteen years back; he gave Esmond his hand as he spoke.

'Others have changed their coats too, my Father,' says Esmond, glancing at his friend's military decoration.

'Hush! I am Mr. or Captain von Holtz, in the Bavarian Elector's service and on a mission to his Highness the Prince of Savoy. You can keep a secret I know from old times.'

'Captain von Holtz,' says Esmond, 'I am your very humble servant.'

'And you, too, have changed your coat,' continues the other, in his laughing way. 'I have heard of you at Cambridge and afterwards: we have friends everywhere; and I am told that Mr. Esmond at Cambridge was as good a fencer as he was a bad theologian.' (So, thinks Esmond, my old *maître d'armes* was a Jesuit, as they said.)

'Perhaps you are right,' says the other, reading his thoughts quite as he used to do in old days; 'you

were all but killed at Hochstedt of a wound in the left side. You were before that at Vigo, aide-de-camp to the Duke of Ormond. You got your company the other day after Ramillies; your General and the Prince-Duke are not friends; he is of the Webbs of Lydiard Tregoze, in the county of York, a relation of my Lord St. John. Your cousin, M. de Castlewood, served his first campaign this year in the Guard. Yes, I do know a few things, as you see.'

Captain Esmond laughed in his turn. 'You have indeed a curious knowledge,' he says. A foible of Mr. Holt's, who did know more about books and men than, perhaps, almost any person Esmond had ever met, was omniscience; thus in every point he here professed to know, he was nearly right, but not quite. Esmond's wound was in the right side, not the left; his first General was General Lumley; Mr. Webb came out of Wiltshire, not out of Yorkshire; and so forth. Esmond did not think fit to correct his old master in these trifling blunders, but they served to give him a knowledge of the other's character, and he smiled to think that this was his oracle of early days; only now no longer infallible or divine.

'Yes,' continues Father Holt, or Captain von Holtz, 'for a man who has not been in England these eight years, I know what goes on in London very well. The old Dean is dead, my Lady Castlewood's father. Do you know that your recusant bishops wanted to consecrate him Bishop of Southampton, and that Collier is Bishop of Thetford by the same imposition? The Princess Anne has the gout and eats too much; when the King returns, Collier will be an archbishop.'

'Amen!' says Esmond, laughing; 'and I hope to see your Eminence no longer in jackboots, but red stockings at Whitehall.'

'You are always with us—I know that—I heard of that when you were at Cambridge; so was the late lord; so is the young Viscount.'

'And so was my father before me,' said Mr. Esmond, looking calmly at the other, who did not, however, show the least sign of intelligence in his impenetrable grey eyes—how well Harry remembered them and their look! only crows'-feet were wrinkled round them —marks of black old Time had settled there.

Esmond's face chose to show no more sign of meaning than the Father's. There may have been on the one side and the other just the faintest glitter of recognition, as you see a bayonet shining out of an ambush; but each party fell back, when everything was again dark.

'And you, mon capitaine, where have you been?' says Esmond, turning away the conversation from this dangerous ground, where neither chose to engage.

'I may have been in Pekin,' says he, 'or I may have been in Paraguay—who knows where? I am now Captain von Holtz, in the service of his Electoral Highness, come to negotiate exchange of prisoners with his Highness of Savoy.'

'Twas well known that very many officers in our army were well-affected towards the young King at St. Germains, whose right to the throne was undeniable, and whose accession to it, at the death of his sister, by far the greater part of the English people would have preferred, to the having a petty German prince for a sovereign, about whose cruelty, rapacity, boorish manners, and odious foreign ways, a thousand stories were current. It wounded our English pride to think that a shabby High-Dutch duke, whose revenues were not a tithe as great as those of many of the princes of our ancient English nobility, who could not speak a word of our language, and whom we

chose to represent as a sort of German boor, feeding on train-oil and sour-crout with a bevy of mistresses in a barn, should come to reign over the proudest and most polished people in the world. Were we, the conquerors of the Grand Monarch, to submit to that ignoble domination? What did the Hanoverian's Protestantism matter to us? Was it not notorious (we were told and led to believe so) that one of the daughters of this Protestant hero was being bred up with no religion at all, as yet, and ready to be made Lutheran or Roman, according as the husband might be whom her parents should find for her? This talk, very idle and abusive much of it was, went on at a hundred mess-tables in the army; there was scarce an ensign that did not hear it, or join in it, and everybody knew, or affected to know, that the Commander-in-Chief himself had relations with his nephew, the Duke of Berwick ('twas by an Englishman, thank God, that we were beaten at Almanza), and that his Grace was most anxious to restore the royal race of his benefactors, and to repair his former treason.

This is certain, that for a considerable period no officer in the Duke's army lost favour with the Commander-in-Chief for entertaining or proclaiming his loyalty towards the exiled family. When the Chevalier de St. George, as the King of England called himself, came with the dukes of the French blood-royal, to join the French army under Vendosme, hundreds of ours saw him and cheered him, and we all said he was like his father in this, who, seeing the action of La Hogue fought between the French ships and ours, was on the side of his native country during the battle. But this at least the Chevalier knew, and everyone knew, that, however well our troops and their general might be inclined towards the Prince personally, in the face of the enemy there was no question at all.

Wherever my Lord Duke found a French army, he would fight and beat it, as he did at Oudenarde, two years after Ramillies, where his Grace achieved another of his transcendent victories; and the noble young Prince, who charged gallantly along with the magnificent Maison-du-Roy, sent to compliment his conquerors after the action.

In this battle, where the young Electoral Prince of Hanover behaved himself very gallantly, fighting on our side, Esmond's dear General Webb distinguished himself prodigiously, exhibiting consummate skill and coolness as a general, and fighting with the personal bravery of a common soldier. Esmond's good luck again attended him; he escaped without a hurt, although more than a third of his regiment was killed, had again the honour to be favourably mentioned in his commander's report, and was advanced to the rank of Major. But of this action there is little need to speak, as it hath been related in every Gazette, and talked of in every hamlet in this country. To return from it to the writer's private affairs, which here, in his old age, and at a distance, he narrates for his children who come after him. Before Oudenarde, after that chance rencontre with Captain von Holtz at Brussels, a space of more than a year elapsed, during which the captain of Jesuits and the captain of Webb's Fusileers were thrown very much together. Esmond had no difficulty in finding out (indeed, the other made no secret of it to him, being assured from old times of his pupil's fidelity) that the negotiator of prisoners was an agent from St. Germains, and that he carried intelligence between great personages in our camp and that of the French. 'My business,' said he—'and I tell you, both because I can trust you and your keen eyes have already discovered it—is between the King

of England and his subjects here engaged in fighting the French King. As between you and them, all the Jesuits in the world will not prevent your quarrelling: fight it out, gentlemen. St. George for England, I say—and you know who says so, wherever he may be.'

I think Holt loved to make a parade of mystery, as it were, and would appear and disappear at our quarters as suddenly as he used to return and vanish in the old days at Castlewood. He had passes between both armies, and seemed to know (but with that inaccuracy which belonged to the good Father's omniscience) equally well what passed in the French camp and in ours. One day he would give Esmond news of a great feste that took place in the French quarters, of a supper of Monsieur de Rohan's where there was play and violins, and then dancing and masques; the King drove thither in Marshal Villars' own guinguette. Another day he had the news of His Majesty's ague: the King had not had a fit these ten days, and might be said to be well. Captain Holtz made a visit to England during this time, so eager was he about negotiating prisoners, and 'twas on returning from this voyage that he began to open himself more to Esmond, and to make him, as occasion served, at their various meetings, several of those confidences which are here set down all together.

The reason of his increased confidence was this: upon going to London, the old director of Esmond's aunt, the Dowager, paid her Ladyship a visit at Chelsey, and there learnt from her that Captain Esmond was acquainted with the secret of his family, and was determined never to divulge it. The knowledge of this fact raised Esmond in his old tutor's eyes, so Holt was pleased to say, and he admired Harry very much for his abnegation.

'The family at Castlewood have done far more for me than my own ever did,' Esmond said. 'I would give my life for them. Why should I grudge the only benefit that 'tis in my power to confer on them?' The good Father's eyes filled with tears at this speech, which to the other seemed very simple: he embraced Esmond, and broke out into many admiring expressions; he said he was a *noble cœur*, that he was proud of him, and fond of him as his pupil and friend—regretted more than ever that he had lost him, and been forced to leave him in those early times, when he might have had an influence over him, have brought him into that only true Church to which the Father belonged, and enlisted him in the noblest army in which a man ever engaged—meaning his own Society of Jesus, which numbers (says he) in its troops the greatest heroes the world ever knew: — warriors brave enough to dare or endure anything, to encounter any odds, to die any death;—soldiers that have won triumphs a thousand times more brilliant than those of the greatest general; that have brought nations on their knees to their sacred banner, the Cross; that have achieved glories and palms incomparably brighter than those awarded to the most splendid earthly conquerors — crowns of immortal light, and seats in the high places of heaven.

Esmond was thankful for his old friend's good opinion, however little he might share the Jesuit Father's enthusiasm. 'I have thought of that question, too,' says he, 'dear Father,' and he took the other's hand—'thought it out for myself, as all men must, and contrive to do the right, and trust to Heaven as devoutly in my way as you in yours. Another six months of you as a child, and I had desired no better. I used to weep upon my pillow at Castlewood as I thought of you, and I might have been a

brother of your order; and who knows,' Esmond added with a smile, 'a priest in full orders, and with a pair of mustachios, and a Bavarian uniform!'

'My son,' says Father Holt, turning red, 'in the cause of religion and loyalty all disguises are fair.'

'Yes,' broke in Esmond, 'all disguises are fair, you say; and all uniforms, say I, black or red—a black cockade or a white one—or a laced hat, or a sombrero, with a tonsure under it. I cannot believe that Saint Francis Xavier sailed over the sea in a cloak, or raised the dead—I tried, and very nearly did once, but cannot. Suffer me to do the right, and to hope for the best in my own way.'

Esmond wished to cut short the good Father's theology, and succeeded; and the other, sighing over his pupil's invincible ignorance, did not withdraw his affection from him, but gave him his utmost confidence —as much, that is to say, as a priest can give: more than most do; for he was naturally garrulous, and too eager to speak.

Holt's friendship encouraged Captain Esmond to ask, what he long wished to know, and none could tell him, some history of the poor mother whom he had often imagined in his dreams, and whom he never knew. He described to Holt those circumstances which are already put down in the first part of this story—the promise he had made to his dear lord, and that dying friend's confession; and he besought Mr. Holt to tell him what he knew regarding the poor woman from whom he had been taken.

'She was of this very town,' Holt said, and took Esmond to see the street where her father lived, and where, as he believed, she was born. 'In 1676, when your father came hither, in the retinue of the late King, then Duke of York, and banished hither in

disgrace, Captain Thomas Esmond became acquainted with your mother, pursued her, and made a victim of her; he hath told me in many subsequent conversations, which I felt bound to keep private then, that she was a woman of great virtue and tenderness, and in all respects a most fond, faithful creature. He called himself Captain Thomas, having good reason to be ashamed of his conduct towards her, and hath spoken to me many times with sincere remorse for that, as with fond love for her many amiable qualities. He owned to having treated her very ill: and that at this time his life was one of profligacy, gambling, and poverty. She became with child of you; was cursed by her own parents at that discovery; though she never upbraided, except by her involuntary tears, and the misery depicted on her countenance, the author of her wretchedness and ruin.

'Thomas Esmond—Captain Thomas, as he was called—became engaged in a gaming-house brawl, of which the consequence was a duel, and a wound so severe that he never—his surgeon said—could outlive it. Thinking his death certain, and touched with remorse, he sent for a priest of the very Church of St. Gudule, where I met you; and on the same day, after his making submission to our Church, was married to your mother a few weeks before you were born. My Lord Viscount Castlewood, Marquis of Esmond, by King James's patent, which I myself took to your father, your Lordship was christened at St. Gudule by the same curé who married your parents, and by the name of Henry Thomas, son of E. Thomas, officier Anglois, and Gertrude Maes. You see you belong to us from your birth, and why I did not christen you when you became my dear little pupil at Castlewood.

'Your father's wound took a favourable turn—

perhaps his conscience was eased by the right he had done—and to the surprise of the doctors he recovered. But as his health came back, his wicked nature, too, returned. He was tired of the poor girl whom he had ruined; and receiving some remittance from his uncle, my Lord the old Viscount, then in England, he pretended business, promised return, and never saw your poor mother more.

'He owned to me, in confession first, but afterwards in talk before your aunt, his wife, else I never could have disclosed what I now tell you, that on coming to London he writ a pretended confession to poor Gertrude Maes—Gertrude Esmond—of his having been married in England previously, before uniting himself with her; said that his name was not Thomas; that he was about to quit Europe for the Virginian plantations, where, indeed, your family had a grant of land from King Charles the First; sent her a supply of money, the half of the last hundred guineas he had, entreated her pardon, and bade her farewell.

'Poor Gertrude never thought that the news in this letter might be untrue as the rest of your father's conduct to her. But though a young man of her own degree, who knew her history, and whom she liked before she saw the English gentleman who was the cause of all her misery, offered to marry her, and to adopt you as his own child, and give you his name, she refused him. This refusal only angered her father, who had taken her home; she never held up her head there, being the subject of constant unkindness after her fall; and some devout ladies of her acquaintance offering to pay a little pension for her, she went into a convent, and you were put out to nurse.

'A sister of the young fellow who would have adopted you as his son was the person who took

charge of you. Your mother and this person were cousins. She had just lost a child of her own, which you replaced, your own mother being too sick and feeble to feed you ; and presently your nurse grew so fond of you, that she even grudged letting you visit the convent where your mother was, and where the nuns petted the little infant, as they pitied and loved its unhappy parent. Her vocation became stronger every day, and at the end of two years she was received as a sister of the house.

'Your nurse's family were silk weavers out of France, whither they returned to Arras in French Flanders, shortly before your mother took her vows, carrying you with them, then a child of three years old. 'Twas a town, before the late vigorous measures of the French King, full of Protestants, and here your nurse's father, old Pastoureau, he with whom you afterwards lived at Ealing, adopted the reformed doctrines, perverting all his house with him. They were expelled thence by the edict of His Most Christian Majesty, and came to London, and set up their looms in Spittlefields. The old man brought a little money with him, and carried on his trade, but in a poor way. He was a widower ; by this time his daughter, a widow too, kept house for him, and his son and he laboured together at their vocation. Meanwhile your father had publicly owned his conversion just before King Charles's death (in whom our Church had much such another convert), was reconciled to my Lord Viscount Castlewood, and married, as you know, to his daughter.

'It chanced that the younger Pastoureau, going with a piece of brocade to the mercer who employed him, on Ludgate Hill, met his old rival coming out of an ordinary there. Pastoureau knew your father at once, seized him by the collar, and upbraided him

as a villain, who had seduced his mistress, and afterwards deserted her and her son. Mr. Thomas Esmond also recognised Pastoureau at once, besought him to calm his indignation, and not to bring a crowd round about them; and bade him to enter into the tavern, out of which he had just stepped, when he would give him any explanation. Pastoureau entered, and heard the landlord order a drawer to show Captain Thomas to a room; it was by his Christian name that your father was familiarly called at his tavern haunts, which, to say the truth, were none of the most reputable.

'I must tell you that Captain Thomas, or my Lord Viscount afterwards, was never at a loss for a story, and could cajole a woman or a dun with a volubility, and an air of simplicity at the same time, of which many a creditor of his has been the dupe. His tales used to gather verisimilitude as he went on with them. He strung together fact after fact with a wonderful rapidity and coherence. It required, saving your presence, a very long habit of acquaintance with your father to know when his Lordship was l——, —telling the truth or no.

'He told me with rueful remorse when he was ill—for the fear of death set him instantly repenting, and with shrieks of laughter when he was well, his Lordship having a very great sense of humour—how in half-an-hour's time, and before a bottle was drunk, he had completely succeeded in biting poor Pastoureau. The seduction he owned too: that he could not help: he was quite ready with tears at a moment's warning, and shed them profusely to melt his credulous listener. He wept for your mother even more than Pastoureau did, who cried very heartily, poor fellow, as my Lord informed me; he swore upon his honour that he had twice sent money to Brussels, and mentioned the

name of the merchant with whom it was lying for poor Gertrude's use. He did not even know whether she had a child or no, or whether she was alive or dead; but got these facts easily out of honest Pastoureau's answers to him. When he heard that she was in a convent, he said he hoped to end his days in one himself, should he survive his wife, whom he hated, and had been forced by a cruel father to marry; and when he was told that Gertrude's son was alive, and actually in London, "I started," says he; "for then, damme, my wife was expecting to lie-in, and I thought should this old Put, my father-in-law, run rusty, here would be a good chance to frighten him."

'He expressed the deepest gratitude to the Pastoureau family for the care of the infant: you were now near six years old; and on Pastoureau bluntly telling him, when he proposed to go that instant and see the darling child, that they never wished to see his ill-omened face again within their doors; that he might have the boy, though they should all be very sorry to lose him; and that they would take his money, they being poor, if he gave it; or bring him up, by God's help, as they had hitherto done, without: he acquiesced in this at once, with a sigh, said, "Well, 'twas better that the dear child should remain with friends who had been so admirably kind to him;" and in his talk to me afterwards, honestly praised and admired the weaver's conduct and spirit; owned that the Frenchman was a right fellow, and he, the Lord have mercy upon him, a sad villain.

'Your father,' Mr. Holt went on to say, 'was good-natured with his money when he had it; and having that day received a supply from his uncle, gave the weaver ten pieces with perfect freedom,

and promised him further remittances. He took down eagerly Pastoureau's name and place of abode in his table-book, and when the other asked him for his own, gave, with the utmost readiness, his name as Captain Thomas, New Lodge, Penzance, Cornwall; he said he was in London for a few days only on business connected with his wife's property; described her as a shrew, though a woman of kind disposition; and depicted his father as a Cornish squire, in an infirm state of health, at whose death he hoped for something handsome, when he promised richly to reward the admirable protector of his child, and to provide for the boy. "And by Gad, sir," he said to me in his strange laughing way, "I ordered a piece of brocade of the very same pattern as that which the fellow was carrying, and presented it to my wife for a morning wrapper, to receive company after she lay-in of our little boy."

'Your little pension was paid regularly enough; and when your father became Viscount Castlewood on his uncle's demise, I was employed to keep a watch over you, and 'twas at my instance that you were brought home. Your foster-mother was dead; her father made acquaintance with a woman whom he married, who quarrelled with his son. The faithful creature came back to Brussels to be near the woman he loved, and died, too, a few months before her. Will you see her cross in the convent cemetery? The Superior is an old penitent of mine, and remembers Sœur Marie Madeleine fondly still.'

Esmond came to this spot in one sunny evening of spring, and saw, amidst a thousand black crosses, casting their shadows across the grassy mounds, that particular one which marked his mother's resting-

place. Many more of those poor creatures that lay there had adopted that same name, with which sorrow had rebaptized her, and which fondly seemed to hint their individual story of love and grief. He fancied her in tears and darkness, kneeling at the foot of her cross, under which her cares were buried. Surely he knelt down, and said his own prayer there, not in sorrow so much as in awe (for even his memory had no recollection of her), and in pity for the pangs which the gentle soul in life had been made to suffer. To this cross she brought them; for this heavenly bridegroom she exchanged the husband who had wooed her, the traitor who had left her. A thousand such hillocks lay round about, the gentle daisies springing out of the grass over them, and each bearing its cross and requiescat. A nun, veiled in black, was kneeling hard by, at a sleeping sister's bedside (so fresh made, that the spring had scarce had time to spin a coverlid for it); beyond the cemetery walls you had glimpses of life and the world, and the spires and gables of the city. A bird came down from a roof opposite, and lit first on a cross, and then on the grass below it, whence it flew away presently with a leaf in its mouth; then came a sound as of chanting, from the chapel of the sisters hard by; others had long since filled the place which poor Mary Magdalene once had there, were kneeling at the same stall, and hearing the same hymns and prayers in which her stricken heart had found consolation. Might she sleep in peace—might she sleep in peace; and we, too, when our struggles and pains are over! But the earth is the Lord's as the heaven is; we are alike His creatures here and yonder. I took a little flower of the hillock and kissed it, and went my way, like the bird that had just lighted on the cross by me, back into the world again. Silent receptacle of death;

tranquil depth of calm, out of reach of tempest and trouble! I felt as one who had been walking below the sea, and treading amidst the bones of shipwrecks.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1707, 1708

DURING the whole of the year which succeeded that in which the glorious battle of Ramillies had been fought, our army made no movement of importance, much to the disgust of very many of our officers remaining inactive in Flanders, who said that his Grace the Captain-General had had fighting enough, and was all for money now, and the enjoyment of his five thousand a year and his splendid palace at Woodstock, which was now being built. And his Grace had sufficient occupation fighting his enemies at home this year, where it began to be whispered that his favour was decreasing, and his Duchess losing her hold on the Queen, who was transferring her royal affections to the famous Mrs. Masham, and Mrs. Masham's humble servant, Mr. Harley. Against their intrigues, our Duke passed a great part of his time intriguing. Mr. Harley was got out of office, and his Grace, in so far, had a victory. But Her Majesty, convinced against her will, was of that opinion still, of which the poet says people are when so convinced, and Mr. Harley before long had his revenge.

Meanwhile the business of fighting did not go on any way to the satisfaction of Marlborough's gallant lieutenants. During all 1707, with the French before us, we had never so much as a battle; our army in Spain was utterly routed at Almanza by the gallant

Duke of Berwick ; and we of Webb's, which regiment the young Duke had commanded before his father's abdication, were a little proud to think that it was our colonel who had achieved this victory. 'I think if I had had Galway's place, and my Fusileers,' says our General, 'we would not have laid down our arms, even to our old colonel, as Galway did ;' and Webb's officers swore if we had had Webb, at least we would not have been taken prisoners. Our dear old General talked incautiously of himself and of others ; a braver or a more brilliant soldier never lived than he ; but he blew his honest trumpet rather more loudly than became a commander of his station, and, mighty man of valour as he was, shook his great spear and blustered before the army too fiercely.

Mysterious Mr. Holtz went off on a secret expedition in the early part of 1708, with great elation of spirits and a prophecy to Esmond that a wonderful something was about to take place. This secret came out on my friend's return to the army, whither he brought a most rueful and dejected countenance, and owned that the great something he had been engaged upon, had failed utterly. He had been indeed with that luckless expedition of the Chevalier de St. George, who was sent by the French King with ships and an army from Dunkirk, and was to have invaded and conquered Scotland. But that ill wind which ever opposed all the projects upon which the Prince ever embarked, prevented the Chevalier's invasion of Scotland, as 'tis known, and blew poor Monsieur von Holtz back into our camp again, to scheme and foretell, and to pry about as usual. The Chevalier (the King of England, as some of us held him) went from Dunkirk to the French army to make the campaign against us. The Duke of Burgundy had the command this year, having the Duke of

Berry with him, and the famous Mareschal Vendosme and the Duke of Matignon to aid him in the campaign. Holtz, who knew everything that was passing in Flanders and France (and the Indies for what I know), insisted that there would be no more fighting in 1708 than there had been in the previous year, and that our commander had reasons for keeping him quiet. Indeed, Esmond's General, who was known as a grumbler, and to have a hearty mistrust of the great Duke, and hundreds more officers besides, did not scruple to say that these private reasons came to the Duke in the shape of crown-pieces from the French King, by whom the Generalissimo was bribed to avoid a battle. There were plenty of men in our lines, quidnuncs, to whom Mr. Webb listened only too willingly, who could specify the exact sums the Duke got, how much fell to Cadogan's share, and what was the precise fee given to Doctor Hare.

And the successes with which the French began the campaign of 1708 served to give strength to these reports of treason, which were in everybody's mouth. Our General allowed the enemy to get between us and Ghent, and declined to attack him though for eight-and-forty hours the armies were in presence of each other. Ghent was taken, and on the same day Monsieur de la Mothe summoned Bruges; and these two great cities fell into the hands of the French without firing a shot. A few days afterwards La Mothe seized upon the fort of Plashendall: and it began to be supposed that all Spanish Flanders, as well as Brabant, would fall into the hands of the French troops; when the Prince Eugene arrived from the Mozelle, and then there was no more shilly-shallying.

The Prince of Savoy always signalised his arrival at the army by a great feast (my Lord Duke's entertainments were both seldom and shabby); and I remember

our General returning from this dinner with the two Commanders-in-Chief; his honest head a little excited by wine, which was dealt out much more liberally by the Austrian than by the English commander:—'Now,' says my General, slapping the table, with an oath, 'he must fight; and when he is forced to it, d—— it, no man in Europe can stand up against Jack Churchill.' Within a week the battle of Oudenarde was fought, when, hate each other as they might, Esmond's General and the Commander-in-Chief were forced to admire each other, so splendid was the gallantry of each upon this day.

The brigade commanded by Major-General Webb gave and received about as hard knocks as any that were delivered in that action, in which Mr. Esmond had the fortune to serve at the head of his own company in his regiment, under the command of their own Colonel as Major-General; and it was his good luck to bring the regiment out of action as commander of it, the four senior officers above him being killed in the prodigious slaughter which happened on that day. I like to think that Jack Haythorn, who sneered at me for being a bastard and a parasite of Webb's, as he chose to call me, and with whom I had had words, shook hands with me the day before the battle begun. Three days before, poor Brace, our Lieutenant-Colonel, had heard of his elder brother's death, and was heir to a baronetcy in Norfolk, and four thousand a year. Fate, that had left him harmless through a dozen campaigns, seized on him just as the world was worth living for, and he went into action knowing, as he said, that the luck was going to turn against him. The Major had just joined us—a creature of Lord Marlborough, put in much to the dislike of the other officers, and to be a spy upon us, as it was said. I know not whether the truth was so, nor who took the

tattle of our mess to headquarters, but Webb's regiment, as its Colonel, was known to be in the Commander-in-Chief's black books: 'And if he did not dare to break it up at home,' our gallant old chief used to say, 'he was determined to destroy it before the enemy;' so that poor Major Proudfoot was put into a post of danger.

Esmond's dear young Viscount, serving as aide-de-camp to my Lord Duke, received a wound, and won an honourable name for himself in the *Gazette;* and Captain Esmond's name was sent in for promotion by his General, too, whose favourite he was. It made his heart beat to think that certain eyes at home, the brightest in the world, might read the page on which his humble services were recorded; but his mind was made up steadily to keep out of their dangerous influence, and to let time and absence conquer that passion he had still lurking about him. Away from Beatrix, it did not trouble him; but he knew as certain that if he returned home, his fever would break out again, and avoided Walcote as a Lincolnshire man avoids returning to his fens, where he is sure that the ague is lying in wait for him.

We of the English party in the army, who were inclined to sneer at everything that came out of Hanover, and to treat as little better than boors and savages the Elector's Court and family, were yet forced to confess that, on the day of Oudenarde, the young Electoral Prince, then making his first campaign, conducted himself with the spirit and courage of an approved soldier. On this occasion his Electoral Highness had better luck than the King of England, who was with his cousins in the enemy's camp, and had to run with them at the ignominious end of the day. With the most consummate generals in the world before them, and an admirable commander on

their own side, they chose to neglect the counsels, and to rush into a combat with the former, which would have ended in the utter annihilation of their army but for the great skill and bravery of the Duke of Vendosme, who remedied, as far as courage and genius might, the disasters occasioned by the squabbles and follies of his kinsmen, the legitimate princes of the blood-royal.

'If the Duke of Berwick had but been in the army, the fate of the day would have been very different,' was all that poor Mr. von Holtz could say; 'and you would have seen that the hero of Almanza was fit to measure swords with the conqueror of Blenheim.'

The business relative to the exchange of prisoners was always going on, and was at least that ostensible one which kept Mr. Holtz perpetually on the move between the forces of the French and the Allies. I can answer for it, that he was once very near hanged as a spy by Major-General Wayne, when he was released and sent on to headquarters, by a special order of the Commander-in-Chief. He came and went, always favoured, wherever he was, by some high though occult protection. He carried messages between the Duke of Berwick and his uncle, our Duke. He seemed to know as well what was taking place in the Prince's quarter as our own: he brought the compliments of the King of England to some of our officers, the gentlemen of Webb's among the rest, for their behaviour on that great day; and after Wynendael, when our General was chafing at the neglect of our Commander-in-Chief, he said he knew how that action was regarded by the chiefs of the French army, and that the stand made before Wynendael Wood was the passage by which the Allies entered Lille.

'Ah!' says Holtz (and some folks were very willing

to listen to him), 'if the King came by his own, how changed the conduct of affairs would be! His Majesty's very exile has this advantage, that he is enabled to read England impartially, and to judge honestly of all the eminent men. His sister is always in the hand of one greedy favourite or another, through whose eyes she sees, and to whose flattery or dependants she gives away everything. Do you suppose that His Majesty, knowing England so well as he does, would neglect such a man as General Webb? He ought to be in the House of Peers, as Lord Lydiard. The enemy and all Europe know his merit; it is that very reputation which certain great people, who hate all equality and independence, can never pardon.' It was intended that these conversations should be carried to Mr. Webb. They were welcome to him, for great as his services were, no man could value them more than John Richmond Webb did himself, and the differences between him and Marlborough being notorious, his Grace's enemies in the army and at home began to court Webb, and set him up against the all-grasping, domineering chief. And soon after the victory of Oudenarde, a glorious opportunity fell into General Webb's way, which that gallant warrior did not neglect, and which gave him the means of immensely increasing his reputation at home.

After Oudenarde, and against the counsels of Marlborough, it was said, the Prince of Savoy sat down before Lille, the capital of French Flanders, and commenced that siege, the most celebrated of our time, and almost as famous as the siege of Troy itself for the feats of valour performed in the assault and the defence. The enmity of the Prince of Savoy against the French King was a furious personal hate, quite unlike the calm hostility of our great English General,

who was no more moved by the game of war than that of billiards, and pushed forward his squadrons, and drove his red battalions hither and thither, as calmly as he would combine a stroke or make a cannon with the balls. The game over (and he played it so as to be pretty sure to win it), not the least animosity against the other party remained in the breast of this consummate tactician. Whereas between the Prince of Savoy and the French it was *guerre à mort*. Beaten off in one quarter, as he had been in Toulon in the last year, he was back again on another frontier of France, assailing it with his indefatigable fury. When the Prince came to the army, the smouldering fires of war were lighted up, and burst out into a flame. Our phlegmatic Dutch allies were made to advance at a quick march—our calm Duke forced into action. The Prince was an army in himself against the French; the energy of his hatred, prodigious, indefatigable—infectious over hundreds of thousands of men. The Emperor's General was repaying, and with a vengeance, the slight the French King had put upon the fiery little Abbé of Savoy. Brilliant and famous as a leader himself, and beyond all measure daring and intrepid, and enabled to cope with almost the best of those famous men of war who commanded the armies of the French King, Eugene had a weapon, the equal of which could not be found in France since the cannon-shot of Sasbach laid low the noble Turenne, and could hurl Marlborough at the heads of the French host, and crush them as with a rock, under which all the gathered strength of their strongest captains must go down.

The English Duke took little part in that vast siege of Lille, which the Imperial Generalissimo pursued with all his force and vigour, further than to cover the besieging lines from the Duke of Burgundy's

army, between which and the Imperialists our Duke lay. Once, when Prince Eugene was wounded, our Duke took his Highness's place in the trenches; but the siege was with the Imperialists, not with us. A division under Webb and Rantzau was detached into Artois and Picardy upon the most painful and odious service that Mr. Esmond ever saw in the course of his military life. The wretched towns of the defenceless provinces, whose young men had been drafted away into the French armies, which year after year the insatiable war devoured, were left at our mercy; and our orders were to show them none. We found places garrisoned by invalids, and children and women; poor as they were, and as the costs of this miserable war had made them, our commission was to rob these almost starving wretches—to tear the food out of their granaries, and strip them of their rags. 'Twas an expedition of rapine and murder we were sent on: our soldiers did deeds such as an honest man must blush to remember. We brought back money and provisions in quantity to the Duke's camp; there had been no one to resist us, and yet who dares to tell with what murder and violence, with what brutal cruelty, outrage, insult, that ignoble booty had been ravished from the innocent and miserable victims of the war?

Meanwhile, gallantly as the operations before Lille had been conducted, the Allies had made but little progress, and 'twas said when we returned to the Duke of Marlborough's camp, that the siege would never be brought to a satisfactory end, and that the Prince of Savoy would be forced to raise it. My Lord Marlborough gave this as his opinion openly; those who mistrusted him, and Mr. Esmond owns himself to be of the number, hinted that the Duke had his reasons why Lille should not be taken, and that he was paid to that end by the French King. If this was

so, and I believe it, General Webb had now a remarkable opportunity of gratifying his hatred of the Commander-in-Chief, of balking that shameful avarice, which was one of the basest and most notorious qualities of the famous Duke, and of showing his own consummate skill as a commander. And when I consider all the circumstances preceding the event which will now be related, that my Lord Duke was actually offered certain millions of crowns provided that the siege of Lille should be raised; that the Imperial army before it was without provisions and ammunition, and must have decamped but for the supplies that they received; that the march of the convoy destined to relieve the siege was accurately known to the French; and that the force covering it was shamefully inadequate to that end, and by six times inferior to Count de la Mothe's army, which was sent to intercept the convoy; when 'tis certain that the Duke of Berwick, De la Mothe's chief, was in constant correspondence with his uncle, the English Generalissimo: I believe on my conscience that 'twas my Lord Marlborough's intention to prevent those supplies, of which the Prince of Savoy stood in absolute need, from ever reaching his Highness; that he meant to sacrifice the little army which covered this convoy, and to betray it as he had betrayed Tollemache at Brest; as he had betrayed every friend he had, to further his own schemes of avarice or ambition. But for the miraculous victory which Esmond's General won over an army six or seven times greater that his own, the siege of Lille must have been raised; and it must be remembered that our gallant little force was under the command of a general whom Marlborough hated, that he was furious with the conqueror, and tried by the most open and shameless injustice afterwards to rob him of the credit of his victory.

CHAPTER XV

GENERAL WEBB WINS BATTLE OF WYNENDAEL

By the besiegers and besieged of Lille, some of the most brilliant feats of valour were performed that ever illustrated any war. On the French side (whose gallantry was prodigious, the skill and bravery of Marshal Boufflers actually eclipsing those of his conqueror, the Prince of Savoy) may be mentioned that daring action of Messieurs de Luxembourg and Tournefort, who, with a body of horse and dragoons, carried powder into the town, of which the besieged were in extreme want, each soldier bringing a bag with forty pounds of powder behind him ; with which perilous provision they engaged our own horse, faced the fire of the foot brought out to meet them : and though half of the men were blown up in the dreadful errand they rode on, a part of them got into the town with the succours of which the garrison was so much in want. A French officer, Monsieur du Bois, performed an act equally daring, and perfectly successful. The Duke's great army lying at Helchin, and covering the siege, and it being necessary for M. de Vendosme to get news of the condition of the place, Captain du Bois performed his famous exploit : not only passing through the lines of the siege, but swimming afterwards no less than seven moats and ditches : and coming back the same way, swimming with his letters in his mouth.

By these letters Monsieur de Boufflers said that he could undertake to hold the place till October ; and

that if one of the convoys of the Allies could be intercepted, they must raise the siege altogether.

Such a convoy as hath been said was now prepared at Ostend, and about to march for the siege; and on the 27th September we (and the French too) had news that it was on its way. It was composed of 700 waggons, containing ammunition of all sorts, and was escorted out of Ostend by 2000 infantry and 300 horse. At the same time M. de la Mothe quitted Bruges, having with him five-and-thirty battalions, and upwards of sixty squadrons and forty guns, in pursuit of the convoy.

Major-General Webb had meanwhile made up a force of twenty battalions and three squadrons of dragoons at Turout, whence he moved to cover the convoy and pursue La Mothe: with whose advanced guard ours came up upon the great plain of Turout, and before the little wood and castle of Wynendael; behind which the convoy was marching.

As soon as they came in sight of the enemy, our advanced troops were halted, with the wood behind them, and the rest of our force brought up as quickly as possible, our little body of horse being brought forward to the opening of the plain, as our General said, to amuse the enemy. When M. de la Mothe came up, he found us posted in two lines in front of the wood; and formed his own army in battle facing ours, in eight lines, four of infantry in front, and dragoons and cavalry behind.

The French began the action, as usual, with a cannonade which lasted three hours, when they made their attack, advancing in eight lines, four of foot and four of horse, upon the allied troops in the wood where we were posted. Their infantry behaved ill: they were ordered to charge with the bayonet, but, instead, began to fire, and almost at the very first discharge

from our men, broke and fled. The cavalry behaved better; with these alone, who were three or four times as numerous as our whole force, Monsieur de la Mothe might have won victory: but only two of our battalions were shaken in the least; and these speedily rallied: nor could the repeated attacks of the French horse cause our troops to budge an inch from the position in the wood in which our General had placed them.

After attacking for two hours, the French retired at nightfall, entirely foiled. With all the loss we had inflicted upon him, the enemy was still three times stronger than we: and it could not be supposed that our General could pursue M. de la Mothe, or do much more than hold our ground about the wood, from which the Frenchman had in vain attempted to dislodge us. La Mothe retired behind his forty guns, his cavalry protecting them better than it had been able to annoy us; and meanwhile the convoy, which was of more importance than all our little force, and the safe passage of which we would have dropped to the last man to accomplish, marched away in perfect safety during the action, and joyfully reached the besieging camp before Lille.

Major-General Cadogan, my Lord Duke's Quarter-master-General (and between whom and Mr. Webb there was no love lost), accompanied the convoy, and joined Mr. Webb with a couple of hundred horse just as the battle was over, and the enemy in full retreat. He offered, readily enough, to charge with his horse upon the French as they fell back; but his force was too weak to inflict any damage upon them; and Mr. Webb, commanding as Cadogan's senior, thought enough was done in holding our ground before an enemy that might still have overwhelmed us had we engaged him in the open territory, and in securing the

safe passage of the convoy. Accordingly, the horse brought up by Cadogan did not draw a sword; and only prevented, by the good countenance they showed, any disposition the French might have had to renew the attack on us. And no attack coming, at night-fall General Cadogan drew off with his squadron, being bound for headquarters, the two Generals at parting grimly saluting each other.

'He will be at Roncq time enough to lick my Lord Duke's trenchers at supper,' says Mr. Webb.

Our own men lay out in the woods of Wynendael that night, and our General had his supper in the little castle there.

'If I was Cadogan, I would have a peerage for this day's work,' General Webb said; 'and, Harry, thou shouldst have a regiment. Thou hast been reported in the last two actions; thou wert near killed in the first. I shall mention thee in my despatch to his Grace the Commander-in-Chief, and recommend thee to poor Dick Harwood's vacant majority. Have you ever a hundred guineas to give Cardonnel? Slip them into his hand to-morrow, when you go to head-quarters with my report.'

In this report the Major-General was good enough to mention Captain Esmond's name with particular favour; and that gentleman carried the despatch to headquarters the next day, and was not a little pleased to bring back a letter by his Grace's secretary, addressed to Lieutenant-General Webb. The Dutch officer despatched by Count Nassau Woudenbourg, Vælt-Mareschal Auverquerque's son, brought back also a complimentary letter to his commander, who had seconded Mr. Webb in the action with great valour and skill.

Esmond, with a low bow and a smiling face, presented his despatch, and saluted Mr. Webb as Lieu-

tenant-General, as he gave it in. The gentlemen round about him—he was riding with his suite on the road to Menin as Esmond came up with him—gave a cheer, and he thanked them, and opened the despatch with rather a flushed, eager face.

He slapped it down on his boot in a rage after he had read it. ''Tis not even writ with his own hand. Read it out, Esmond.' And Esmond read it out :—

'Sir,—Mr. Cadogan is just now come in, and has acquainted me with the success of the action you had yesterday in the afternoon against the body of troops commanded by M. de la Mothe, at Wynendael, which must be attributed chiefly to your good conduct and resolution. You may be sure I shall do you justice at home, and be glad on all occasions to own the service you have done in securing this convoy.—Yours, &c., 'M.'

'Two lines by that d——d Cardonnel, and no more, for the taking of Lille—for beating five times our number—for an action as brilliant as the best he ever fought,' says poor Mr. Webb. 'Lieutenant-General! That's not his doing. I was the oldest major-general. By ——, I believe he had been better pleased if I had been beat.'

The letter to the Dutch officer was in French, and longer and more complimentary than that to Mr. Webb.

'And this is the man,' he broke out, 'that's gorged with gold—that's covered with titles and honours that we won for him—and that grudges even a line of praise to a comrade in arms! Hasn't he enough? Don't we fight that he may roll in riches? Well, well, wait for the *Gazette*, gentlemen. The Queen and the country will do us justice if his Grace denies it us.' There were tears of rage in the brave warrior's eyes as he spoke; and he dashed them off his face on

to his glove. He shook his fist in the air. 'Oh, by the Lord!' says he, 'I know what I had rather have than a peerage!'

'And what is that, sir?' some of them asked.

'I had rather have a quarter of an hour with John Churchill, on a fair green field, and only a pair of rapiers between my shirt and his'——

'Sir!' interposes one.

'Tell him so! I know that's what you mean. I know every word goes to him that's dropped from every general officer's mouth. I don't say he's not brave. Curse him, he's brave enough; but we'll wait for the *Gazette*, gentlemen. God save Her Majesty! she'll do us justice.'

The *Gazette* did not come to us till a month afterwards; when my General and his officers had the honour to dine with Prince Eugene in Lille; his Highness being good enough to say that we had brought the provisions, and ought to share in the banquet. 'Twas a great banquet. His Grace of Marlborough was on his Highness's right, and on his left the Mareschal de Boufflers, who had so bravely defended the place. The chief officers of either army were present; and you may be sure Esmond's General was splendid this day: his tall noble person, and manly beauty of face, made him remarkable anywhere; he wore, for the first time, the star of the Order of Generosity, that His Prussian Majesty had sent to him for his victory. His Highness the Prince of Savoy called a toast to the conqueror of Wynendael. My Lord Duke drank it with rather a sickly smile. The aides-de-camp were present; and Harry Esmond and his dear young lord were together, as they always strove to be when duty would permit: they were over against the table where the generals were, and could see all that passed pretty well. Frank laughed at my Lord Duke's glum face:

the affair of Wynendael, and the Captain-General's conduct to Webb, had been the talk of the whole army. When his Highness spoke, and gave, 'Le vainqueur de Wynendael ; son armée et sa victoire,' adding, 'qui nous font dîner à Lille aujourd'huy '—there was a great cheer through the hall ; for Mr. Webb's bravery, generosity, and very weaknesses of character caused him to be beloved in the army.

'Like Hector handsome, and like Paris brave !' whispers Frank Castlewood. 'A Venus, an elderly Venus, couldn't refuse him a pippin. Stand up, Harry ! See, we are drinking the army of Wynendael. Ramillies is nothing to it. Huzzay ! huzzay !'

At this very time, and just after our General had made his acknowledgment, some one brought in an English *Gazette*—and was passing it from hand to hand down the table. Officers were eager enough to read it ; mothers and sisters at home must have sickened over it. There scarce came out a *Gazette* for six years that did not tell of some heroic death or some brilliant achievement.

'Here it is—action of Wynendael—here you are, General,' says Frank, seizing hold of the little dingy paper that soldiers love to read so ; and scrambling over from our bench, he went to where the General sat, who knew him, and had seen many a time at his table his laughing, handsome face, which everybody loved who saw. The generals in their great perukes made way for him. He handed the paper over General Dohna's buff-coat to our General on the opposite side.

He came hobbling back, and blushing at his feat : 'I thought he'd like it, Harry,' the young fellow whispered. 'Didn't I like to read my name after Ramillies, in the *London Gazette ?*—Viscount Castlewood serving a volunteer—— I say what's yonder ?'

Mr. Webb, reading the *Gazette*, looked very strange —slapped it down on the table—then sprang up in his place, and began, 'Will your Highness please to '——

His Grace the Duke of Marlborough here jumped up too—'There's some mistake, my dear General Webb.'

'Your Grace had better rectify it,' says Mr. Webb, holding out the letter; but he was five off his Grace the Prince Duke, who, besides, was higher than the General (being seated with the Prince of Savoy, the Electoral Prince of Hanover, and the envoys of Prussia and Denmark, under a baldaquin), and Webb could not reach him, tall as he was.

'Stay,' says he, with a smile, as if catching at some idea, and then, with a perfect courtesy, drawing his sword, he ran the *Gazette* through with the point, and said, 'Permit me to hand it to your Grace.'

The Duke looked very black. 'Take it,' says he, to his Master of the Horse, who was waiting behind him.

The Lieutenant-General made a very low bow, and retired and finished his glass. The *Gazette* in which Mr. Cardonnel, the Duke's secretary, gave an account of the victory of Wynendael, mentioned Mr. Webb's name, but gave the sole praise and conduct of the action to the Duke's favourite, Mr. Cadogan.

There was no little talk and excitement occasioned by this strange behaviour of General Webb, who had almost drawn a sword upon the Commander-in-Chief; but the General, after the first outbreak of his anger, mastered it outwardly altogether; and, by his subsequent behaviour, had the satisfaction of even more angering the Commander-in-Chief, than he could have done by any public exhibition of resentment.

On returning to his quarters, and consulting with his chief adviser, Mr. Esmond, who was now entirely in the General's confidence, and treated by him as a

friend, and almost a son, Mr. Webb writ a letter to his Grace the Commander-in-Chief, in which he said:—

'Your Grace must be aware that the sudden perusal of the *London Gazette*, in which your Grace's secretary, Mr. Cardonnel, hath mentioned Major-General Cadogan's name as the officer commanding in the late action of Wynendael, must have caused a feeling of anything but pleasure to the General who fought that action.

'Your Grace must be aware that Mr. Cadogan was not even present at the battle, though he arrived with squadrons of horse at its close, and put himself under the command of his superior officer. And as the result of the battle of Wynendael, in which Lieutenant-General Webb had the good fortune to command, was the capture of Lille, the relief of Brussels, then invested by the enemy under the Elector of Bavaria, the restoration of the great cities of Ghent and Bruges, of which the enemy (by treason within the walls) had got possession in the previous year, Mr. Webb cannot consent to forego the honours of such a success and service, for the benefit of Mr. Cadogan, or any other person.

'As soon as the military operations of the year are over, Lieutenant-General Webb will request permission to leave the army, and return to his place in Parliament, where he gives notice to his Grace the Commander-in-Chief, that he shall lay his case before the House of Commons, the country, and Her Majesty the Queen.

'By his eagerness to rectify that false statement of the *Gazette*, which had been written by his Grace's secretary, Mr. Cardonnel, Mr. Webb, not being able to reach his Grace the Commander-in-Chief on account of the gentlemen seated between them, placed the paper containing the false statement on his sword, so that it might more readily arrive in the hands of his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, who surely would wish to do justice to every officer of his army.

'Mr. Webb knows his duty too well to think of

insubordination to his superior officer, or of using his sword in a campaign against any but the enemies of Her Majesty. He solicits permission to return to England immediately the military duties will permit, and take with him to England Captain Esmond, of his regiment, who acted as his aide-de-camp, and was present during the entire action, and noted by his watch the time when Mr. Cadogan arrived at its close.'

The Commander-in-Chief could not but grant this permission, nor could he take notice of Webb's letter, though it was couched in terms the most insulting. Half the army believed that the cities of Ghent and Bruges were given up by a treason, which some in our army very well understood; that the Commander-in-Chief would not have relieved Lille, if he could have helped himself; that he would not have fought that year had not the Prince of Savoy forced him. When the battle once began, then, for his own renown, my Lord Marlborough would fight as no man in the world ever fought better; and no bribe on earth could keep him from beating the enemy.*

* Our grandfather's hatred of the Duke of Marlborough appears all through his account of these campaigns. He always persisted that the Duke was the greatest traitor and soldier history ever told of; and declared that he took bribes on all hands during the war. My Lord Marquis (for so we may call him here, though he never went by any other name than Colonel Esmond) was in the habit of telling many stories which he did not set down in his Memoirs, and which he had from his friend the Jesuit, who was not always correctly informed, and who persisted that Marlborough was looking for a bribe of two millions of crowns before the campaign of Ramillies.

And our grandmother used to tell us children, that on his first presentation to my Lord Duke, the Duke turned his back upon my grandfather; and said to the Duchess, who told my Lady Dowager at Chelsey, who afterwards told Colonel Esmond: 'Tom Esmond's bastard has been to my levée: he has the hang-dog look of his rogue of a father'—an expression which my grandfather never forgave. He was as constant in his dislikes as in his attachments; and exceedingly partial to Webb, whose side he took against the more celebrated general. We have General Webb's portrait now at Castlewood, Va.

But the matter was taken up by the subordinates; and half the army might have been by the ears, if the quarrel had not been stopped. General Cadogan sent an intimation to General Webb to say that he was ready if Webb liked, and would meet him. This was a kind of invitation our stout old General was always too ready to accept, and 'twas with great difficulty we got the General to reply that he had no quarrel with Mr. Cadogan, who had behaved with perfect gallantry, but only with those at headquarters, who had belied him. Mr. Cardonnel offered General Webb reparation; Mr. Webb said he had a cane at the service of Mr. Cardonnel, and the only satisfaction he wanted from him was one he was not likely to get, namely, the truth. The officers in our staff of Webb's, and those in the immediate suite of the General, were ready to come to blows; and hence arose the only affair in which Mr. Esmond ever engaged as principal, and that was from a revengeful wish to wipe off an old injury.

My Lord Mohun, who had a troop in Lord Macclesfield's regiment of the Horse Guards, rode this campaign with the Duke. He had sunk by this time to the very worst reputation; he had had another fatal duel in Spain; he had married, and forsaken his wife; he was a gambler, a profligate, and debauchee. He joined just before Oudenarde; and, as Esmond feared, as soon as Frank Castlewood heard of his arrival, Frank was for seeking him out, and killing him. The wound my Lord got at Oudenarde prevented their meeting, but that was nearly healed, and Mr. Esmond trembled daily lest any chance should bring his boy and this known assassin together. They met at the mess-table of Handyside's regiment at Lille; the officer commanding not knowing of the feud between the two noblemen.

Esmond had not seen the hateful handsome face of

Mohun for nine years, since they had met on that fatal night in Leicester Field. It was degraded with crime and passion now; it wore the anxious look of a man who has three deaths, and who knows how many hidden shames, and lusts, and crimes on his conscience. He bowed with a sickly low bow, and slunk away when our host presented us round to one another. Frank Castlewood had not known him till then, so changed was he. He knew the boy well enough.

'Twas curious to look at the two—especially the young man, whose face flushed up when he heard the hated name of the other; and who said in his bad French and his brave boyish voice, 'He had long been anxious to meet my Lord Mohun.' The other only bowed, and moved away from him. To do him justice, he wished to have no quarrel with the lad.

Esmond put himself between them at table. 'D—— it,' says Frank, 'why do you put yourself in the place of a man who is above you in degree? My Lord Mohun should walk after me. I want to sit by my Lord Mohun.'

Esmond whispered to Lord Mohun, that Frank was hurt in the leg at Oudenarde; and besought the other to be quiet. Quiet enough he was for some time; disregarding the many taunts which young Castlewood flung at him, until after several healths, when my Lord Mohun got to be rather in liquor.

'Will you go away, my Lord?' Mr. Esmond said to him, imploring him to quit the table.

'No, by G—,' says my Lord Mohun. 'I'll not go away for any man;' he was quite flushed with wine by this time.

The talk got round to the affairs of yesterday. Webb had offered to challenge the Commander-in-Chief: Webb had been ill-used: Webb was the bravest, handsomest, vainest man in the army. Lord

Mohun did not know that Esmond was Webb's aide-de-camp. He began to tell some stories against the General; which, from t'other side of Esmond, young Castlewood contradicted.

'I can't bear any more of this,' says my Lord Mohun.

'Nor can I, my Lord,' says Mr. Esmond, starting up. 'The story my Lord Mohun has told respecting General Webb is false, gentlemen—false, I repeat,' and making a low bow to Lord Mohun, and without a single word more, Esmond got up and left the dining-room. These affairs were common enough among the military of those days. There was a garden behind the house, and all the party turned instantly into it; and the two gentlemen's coats were off and their points engaged within two minutes after Esmond's words had been spoken. If Captain Esmond had put Mohun out of the world, as he might, a villain would have been punished and spared further villainies —but who is one man to punish another? I declare upon my honour that my only thought was to prevent Lord Mohun from mischief with Frank, and the end of this meeting was, that after half-a-dozen passes my Lord went home with a hurt which prevented him from lifting his right arm for three months.

'Oh, Harry! why didn't you kill the villain?' young Castlewood asked. 'I can't walk without a crutch: but I could have met him on horseback with sword and pistol.' But Harry Esmond said, ''Twas best to have no man's life on one's conscience, not even that villain's.' And this affair, which did not occupy three minutes, being over, the gentlemen went back to their wine, and my Lord Mohun to his quarters, where he was laid up with a fever which had spared mischief had it proved fatal. And very soon after this affair Harry Esmond and his General

left the camp for London; whither a certain reputation had preceded the Captain, for my Lady Castlewood of Chelsey received him as if he had been a conquering hero. She gave a great dinner to Mr. Webb, where the General's chair was crowned with laurels; and her Ladyship called Esmond's health in a toast, to which my kind General was graciously pleased to bear the strongest testimony: and took down a mob of at least forty coaches to cheer our General as he came out of the House of Commons, the day when he received the thanks of Parliament for his action. The mob huzza'd and applauded him, as well as the fine company: it was splendid to see him waving his hat, and bowing, and laying his hand upon his Order of Generosity. He introduced Mr. Esmond to Mr. St. John and the Right Honourable Robert Harley, Esquire, as he came out of the House walking between them; and was pleased to make many flattering observations regarding Mr. Esmond's behaviour during the three last campaigns.

Mr. St. John (who had the most winning presence of any man I ever saw, excepting always my peerless young Frank Castlewood) said he had heard of Mr. Esmond before from Captain Steele, and how he had helped Mr. Addison to write his famous poem of the 'Campaign.'

''Twas as great an achievement as the victory of Blenheim itself,' Mr. Harley said, who was famous as a judge and patron of letters, and so, perhaps, it may be—though for my part I think there are twenty beautiful lines, but all the rest is commonplace, and Mr. Addison's hymn worth a thousand such poems.

All the town was indignant at my Lord Duke's unjust treatment of General Webb, and applauded the vote of thanks which the House of Commons gave to the General for his victory at Wynendael. 'Tis

certain that the capture of Lille was the consequence of that lucky achievement, and the humiliation of the old French King, who was said to suffer more at the loss of this great city, than from any of the former victories our troops had won over him. And, I think, no small part of Mr. Webb's exultation at his victory arose from the idea that Marlborough had been disappointed of a great bribe the French King had promised him, should the siege be raised. The very sum of money offered to him was mentioned by the Duke's enemies; and honest Mr. Webb chuckled at the notion, not only of beating the French, but of beating Marlborough too, and intercepting a convoy of three millions of French crowns, that were on their way to the Generalissimo's insatiable pockets. When the General's lady went to the Queen's drawing-room, all the Tory women crowded round her with congratulations, and made her a train greater than the Duchess of Marlborough's own. Feasts were given to the General by all the chiefs of the Tory party, who vaunted him as the Duke's equal in military skill; and perhaps used the worthy soldier as their instrument, whilst he thought they were but acknowledging his merits as a commander. As the General's aide-de-camp and favourite officer, Mr. Esmond came in for a share of his chief's popularity, and was presented to Her Majesty and advanced to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel at the request of his grateful chief.

We may be sure there was one family in which any good fortune that happened to Esmond caused such a sincere pride and pleasure, that he, for his part, was thankful he could make them so happy. With these fond friends Blenheim and Oudenarde seemed to be mere trifling incidents of the war; and Wynendael was its crowning victory. Esmond's mistress never

tired to hear accounts of the battle; and I think General Webb's lady grew jealous of her, for the General was for ever at Kensington, and talking on that delightful theme. As for his aide-de-camp, though, no doubt, Esmond's own natural vanity was pleased at the little share of reputation which his good fortune had won him, yet it was chiefly precious to him (he may say so, now that he hath long since outlived it) because it pleased his mistress, and, above all, because Beatrix valued it.

As for the old Dowager of Chelsey, never was an old woman in all England more delighted nor more gracious than she. Esmond had his quarters in her Ladyship's house, where the domestics were instructed to consider him as their master. She bade him give entertainments, of which she defrayed the charges, and was charmed when his guests were carried away tipsy in their coaches. She must have his picture taken; and accordingly he was painted by Mr. Jervas, in his red coat, and smiling upon a bombshell, which was bursting at the corner of the piece. She vowed that unless he made a great match, she should never die easy, and was for ever bringing young ladies to Chelsey, with pretty faces and pretty fortunes, at the disposal of the Colonel. He smiled to think how times were altered with him, and of the early days in his father's lifetime, when a trembling page he stood before her, with her Ladyship's basin and ewer, or crouched in her coach-step. The only fault she found with him was, that he was more sober than an Esmond ought to be; and would neither be carried to bed by his valet, nor lose his heart to any beauty, whether of St. James's or Covent Garden.

What is the meaning of fidelity in love, and whence the birth of it? 'Tis a state of mind that men fall into, and depending on the man rather than the

woman. We love being in love, that's the truth on't. If we had not met Joan, we should have met Kate, and adored her. We know our mistresses are no better than many other women, nor no prettier, nor no wiser, nor no wittier. 'Tis not for these reasons we love a woman, or for any special quality or charm I know of; we might as well demand that a lady should be the tallest woman in the world, like the Shropshire giantess,* as that she should be a paragon in any other character, before we began to love her. Esmond's mistress had a thousand faults beside her charms; he knew both perfectly well! She was imperious, she was light-minded, she was flighty, she was false, she had no reverence in her character; she was in everything, even in beauty, the contrast of her mother, who was the most devoted and the least selfish of women. Well, from the very first moment he saw her on the stairs at Walcote, Esmond knew he loved Beatrix. There might be better women—he wanted that one. He cared for none other. Was it because she was gloriously beautiful? Beautiful as she was, he had heard people say a score of times in their company that Beatrix's mother looked as young, and was the handsomer of the two. Why did her voice thrill in his ear so? She could not sing near so well as Nicolini or Mrs. Tofts; nay, she sang out of tune, and yet he liked to hear her better than St. Cecilia. She had not a finer complexion than Mrs. Steele (Dick's wife, whom he had now got, and who ruled poor Dick with a rod of pickle), and yet to see her dazzled Esmond; he would shut his eyes, and the thought of her dazzled him all the same. She was brilliant and lively in talk, but not so incomparably witty as her mother, who, when she was cheerful, said the finest

* 'Tis not thus *woman loves:* Col. E hath owned to his folly for a *score of women* besides.—R.

things; but yet to hear her, and to be with her, was Esmond's greatest pleasure. Days passed away between him and these ladies, he scarce knew how. He poured his heart out to them, so as he never could in any other company, where he hath generally passed for being moody, or supercilious and silent. This society * was more delightful than that of the greatest wits to him. May Heaven pardon him the lies he told the Dowager at Chelsey in order to get a pretext for going away to Kensington: the business at the Ordnance which he invented; the interviews with his General, the courts and statesmen's levées which he *didn't* frequent, and described; who wore a new suit on Sunday at St. James's or at the Queen's birthday; how many coaches filled the street at Mr. Harley's levée; how many bottles he had had the honour to drink over-night with Mr. St. John at the 'Cocoa-Tree,' or at the 'Garter' with Mr. Walpole and Mr. Steele.

Mistress Beatrix Esmond had been a dozen times on the point of making great matches, so the Court scandal said; but for his part Esmond never would believe the stories against her; and came back, after three years' absence from her, not so frantic as he had been perhaps, but still hungering after her and no other; still hopeful, still kneeling, with his heart in his hand for the young lady to take. We were now got to 1709. She was near twenty-two years old, and three years at Court and without a husband.

''Tis not for want of being asked,' Lady Castlewood said, looking into Esmond's heart, as she could, with that perceptiveness affection gives. 'But she will make no mean match, Harry; she will not marry as I would have her; the person whom I should like

* And, indeed, so was his to them, a thousand thousand times more charming, for where was his equal?—R.

to call my son, and Henry Esmond knows who that is, is best served by my not pressing his claim. Beatrix is so wilful, that what I would urge on her, she would be sure to resist. The man who would marry her will not be happy with her, unless he be a great person, and can put her in a great position. Beatrix loves admiration more than love; and longs, beyond all things, for command. Why should a mother speak so of her child? You are my son, too, Harry. You should know the truth about your sister. I thought you might cure yourself of your passion,' my Lady added fondly. 'Other people can cure themselves of that folly, you know. But I see you are still as infatuated as ever. When we read your name in the *Gazette*, I pleaded for you, my poor boy. Poor boy, indeed! You are growing a grave old gentleman, now, and I am an old woman. She likes your fame well enough, and she likes your person. She says you have wit, and fire, and good-breeding, and are more natural than the fine gentlemen of the Court. But this is not enough. She wants a commander-in-chief, and not a colonel. Were a duke to ask her, she would leave an earl whom she had promised. I told you so before. I know not how my poor girl is so worldly.'

'Well,' says Esmond, 'a man can but give his best and his all. She has that from me. What little reputation I have won, I swear I cared for it because I thought Beatrix would be pleased with it. What care I to be a colonel or a general? Think you 'twill matter a few score years hence, what our foolish honours to-day are? I would have had a little fame, that she might wear it in her hat. If I had anything better, I would endow her with it. If she wants my life, I would give it her. If she marries another, I will say God bless him. I make no boast, nor no complaint. I think my fidelity is folly perhaps. But

so it is. I cannot help myself. I love her. You are a thousand times better: the fondest, the fairest, the dearest of women. Sure my dear lady, I see all Beatrix's faults as well as you do. But she is my fate. 'Tis endurable. I shall not die for not having her. I think I should be no happier if I won her. Que voulez-vous? as my Lady of Chelsey would say. Je l'aime.'

'I wish she would have you,' said Harry's fond mistress, giving a hand to him. He kissed the fair hand ('twas the prettiest dimpled little hand in the world, and my Lady Castlewood, though now almost forty years old, did not look to be within ten years of her age). He kissed and kept her fair hand as they talked together.

'Why,' says he, 'should she hear me? She knows what I would say. Far or near, she knows I'm her slave. I have sold myself for nothing, it may be. Well, 'tis the price I choose to take. I am worth nothing, or I am worth all.'

'You are such a treasure,' Esmond's mistress was pleased to say, 'that the woman who has your love, shouldn't change it away against a kingdom, I think. I am a country-bred woman, and cannot say but the ambitions of the town seem mean to me. I never was awe-stricken by my Lady Duchess's rank and finery, or afraid,' she added, with a sly laugh, 'of anything but her temper. I hear of Court ladies who pine because Her Majesty looks cold on them; and great noblemen who would give a limb that they might wear a garter on the other. This worldliness, which I can't comprehend, was born with Beatrix, who, on the first day of her waiting, was a perfect courtier. We are like sisters, and she the elder sister, somehow. She tells me I have a mean spirit. I laugh, and say she adores a coach-and-six. I cannot reason her out

of her ambition. 'Tis natural to her, as to me to love quiet, and be indifferent about rank and riches. What are they, Harry? and for how long do they last? Our home is not here.' She smiled as she spoke, and looked like an angel that was only on earth on a visit. 'Our home is where the just are, and where our sins and sorrows enter not. My father used to rebuke me, and say that I was too hopeful about heaven. But I cannot help my nature, and grow obstinate as I grow to be an old woman; and as I love my children so, sure our Father loves us with a thousand and a thousand times greater love. It must be that we shall meet yonder, and be happy. Yes, you—and my children, and my dear lord. Do you know, Harry, since his death, it has always seemed to me as if his love came back to me, and that we are parted no more. Perhaps he is here now, Harry—I think he is. Forgiven I am sure he is: even Mr. Atterbury absolved him, and he died forgiving. Oh, what a noble heart he had! How generous he was! I was but fifteen and a child when he married me. How good he was to stoop to me! He was always good to the poor and humble.' She stopped, then presently, with a peculiar expression, as if her eyes were looking into heaven, and saw my Lord there, she smiled, and gave a little laugh. 'I laugh to see you, sir,' she says; 'when you come, it seems as if you never were away.' One may put her words down, and remember them, but how describe her sweet tones, sweeter than music!

My young lord did not come home at the end of the campaign, and wrote that he was kept at Bruxelles on military duty. Indeed, I believe he was engaged in laying siege to a certain lady, who was of the suite of Madame de Soissons, the Prince of Savoy's mother, who was just dead, and who, like the Flemish

fortresses, was taken and retaken a great number of times during the war, and occupied by French, English, and Imperialists. Of course, Mr. Esmond did not think fit to enlighten Lady Castlewood regarding the young scapegrace's doings; nor had he said a word about the affair with Lord Mohun, knowing how abhorrent that man's name was to his mistress. Frank did not waste much time or money on pen and ink; and, when Harry came home with his General, only writ two lines to his mother, to say his wound in the leg was almost healed, that he would keep his coming of age next year—that the duty aforesaid would keep him at Bruxelles, and that Cousin Harry would tell all the news.

But from Bruxelles, knowing how the Lady Castlewood always liked to have a letter about the famous 29th of December, my Lord writ her a long and full one, and in this he must have described the affair with Mohun; for when Mr. Esmond came to visit his mistress one day, early in the new year, to his great wonderment, she and her daughter both came up and saluted him, and after them the Dowager of Chelsey, too, whose chairman had just brought her Ladyship from her village to Kensington across the fields. After this honour, I say, from the two ladies of Castlewood, the Dowager came forward in great state, with her grand tall head-dress of King James's reign, that she never forsook, and said, 'Cousin Henry, all our family have met; and we thank you, Cousin, for your noble conduct towards the head of our house.' And pointing to her blushing cheek, she made Mr. Esmond aware that he was to enjoy the rapture of an embrace there. Having saluted one cheek, she turned to him the other. 'Cousin Harry,' said both the other ladies, in a little chorus, 'we thank you for your noble conduct;' and then Harry

became aware that the story of the Lille affair had come to his kinswomen's ears. It pleased him to hear them all saluting him as one of their family.

The tables of the dining-room were laid for a great entertainment; and the ladies were in gala dresses—my Lady of Chelsey in her highest tour, my Lady Viscountess out of black, and looking fair and happy *à ravir;* and the Maid of Honour attired with that splendour which naturally distinguished her, and wearing on her beautiful breast the French officer's star, which Frank had sent home after Ramillies.

'You see, 'tis a gala day with us,' says she, glancing down to the star complacently, 'and we have our orders on. Does not mamma look charming? 'Twas I dressed her!' Indeed, Esmond's dear mistress, blushing as he looked at her, with her beautiful fair hair, and an elegant dress, according to the *mode*, appeared to have the shape and complexion of a girl of twenty.

On the table was a fine sword, with a red velvet scabbard, and a beautiful chased silver handle, with a blue riband for a sword-knot. 'What is this?' says the Captain, going up to look at this pretty piece.

Mrs. Beatrix advanced towards it. 'Kneel down,' says she: 'we dub you our knight with this'—and she waved the sword over his head. 'My Lady Dowager hath given the sword; and I give the riband, and mamma hath sewn on the fringe.'

'Put the sword on him, Beatrix,' says her mother. 'You are our knight, Harry—our true knight. Take a mother's thanks and prayers for defending her son, my dear dear friend.' She could say no more, and even the Dowager was affected, for a couple of rebellious tears made sad marks down those wrinkled old roses which Esmond had just been allowed to salute.

"You are our Knight, Harry"

'We had a letter from dearest Frank,' his mother said, 'three days since, whilst you were on your visit to your friend Captain Steele, at Hampton. He told us all that you had done, and how nobly you had put yourself between him and that—that wretch.'

'And I adopt you from this day,' says the Dowager; 'and I wish I was richer, for your sake, son Esmond,' she added with a wave of her hand; and as Mr.

Esmond dutifully went down on his knee before her Ladyship, she cast her eyes up to the ceiling (the gilt chandelier, and the twelve wax-candles in it, for the party was numerous), and invoked a blessing from that quarter upon the newly adopted son.

'Dear Frank,' says the other Viscountess, 'how fond he is of his military profession! He is studying fortification very hard. I wish he were here. We shall keep his coming of age at Castlewood next year.'

'If the campaign permit us,' says Mr. Esmond.

'I am never afraid when he is with you,' cries the boy's mother. 'I am sure my Henry will always defend him.'

'But there will be a peace before next year; we know it for certain,' cries the Maid of Honour. 'Lord Marlborough will be dismissed, and that horrible Duchess turned out of all her places. Her Majesty won't speak to her now. Did you see her at Bushy, Harry? She is furious, and she ranges about the Park like a lioness, and tears people's eyes out.'

'And the Princess Anne will send for somebody,' says my Lady of Chelsey, taking out her medal and kissing it.

'Did you see the King at Oudenarde, Harry?' his mistress asked. She was a staunch Jacobite, and would no more have thought of denying her King than her God.

'I saw the young Hanoverian only,' Harry said. 'The Chevalier de St. George'——

'The King, sir, the King!' said the ladies and Miss Beatrix; and she clapped her pretty hands, and cried, 'Vive le Roy!'

By this time there came a thundering knock, that

drove in the doors of the house almost. It was three o'clock, and the company were arriving; and presently the servant announced Captain Steele and his lady.

Captain and Mrs. Steele, who were the first to arrive, had driven to Kensington from their country house, the Hovel at Hampton Wick. 'Not from our mansion in Bloomsbury Square,' as Mrs. Steele took care to inform the ladies. Indeed, Harry had ridden away from Hampton that very morning, leaving the couple by the ears; for from the chamber where he lay, in a bed that was none of the cleanest, and kept awake by the company which he had in his own bed, and the quarrel which was going on in the next room, he could hear both night and morning the curtain lecture which Mrs. Steele was in the habit of administering to poor Dick.

At night it did not matter so much for the culprit; Dick was fuddled, and when in that way no scolding could interrupt his benevolence. Mr. Esmond could hear him coaxing and speaking in that maudlin manner, which punch and claret produce, to his beloved Prue, and beseeching her to remember that there was a *distiwisht officer ithe rex roob*, who would overhear her. She went on, nevertheless, calling him a drunken wretch, and was only interrupted in her harangues by the Captain's snoring.

In the morning, the unhappy victim awoke to a headache and consciousness, and the dialogue of the night was resumed. 'Why do you bring captains home to dinner when there's not a guinea in the house? How am I to give dinners when you leave me without a shilling? How am I to go trapesing to Kensington in my yellow satin sack before all the fine company? I've nothing fit to put on; I never have:' and so the dispute went on—Mr. Esmond

interrupting the talk when it seemed to be growing too intimate by blowing his nose as loudly as ever he could, at the sound of which trumpet there came a lull. But Dick was charming, though his wife was odious, and 'twas to give Mr. Steele pleasure that the ladies of Castlewood, who were ladies of no small fashion, invited Mrs. Steele.

Besides the Captain and his lady there was a great and notable assemblage of company: my Lady of Chelsey having sent her lacqueys and liveries to aid the modest attendance at Kensington. There was Lieutenant-General Webb, Harry's kind patron, of whom the Dowager took possession, and who resplended in velvet and gold lace; there was Harry's new acquaintance, the Right Honourable Henry St. John, Esquire, the General's kinsman, who was charmed with the Lady Castlewood, even more than with her daughter; there was one of the greatest noblemen in the kingdom, the Scots Duke of Hamilton, just created Duke of Brandon in England, and two other noble Lords of the Tory party, my Lord Ashburnham, and another I have forgot; and for ladies, her Grace the Duchess of Ormond and her daughters, the Lady Mary and the Lady Betty, the former one of Mistress Beatrix's colleagues in waiting on the Queen.

'What a party of Tories!' whispered Captain Steele to Esmond, as we were assembled in the parlour before dinner. Indeed, all the company present, save Steele, were of that faction.

Mr. St. John made his special compliments to Mrs. Steele, and so charmed her that she declared she would have Steele a Tory too.

'Or will you have me a Whig?' says Mr. St. John. 'I think, madam, you could convert a man to anything.'

'If Mr. St. John ever comes to Bloomsbury Square I will teach him what I know,' says Mrs. Steele, dropping her handsome eyes. 'Do you know Bloomsbury Square?'

'Do I know the Mall? Do I know the Opera? Do I know the reigning toast? Why, Bloomsbury is the very height of the mode,' says Mr. St. John. ''Tis *rus in urbe.* You have gardens all the way to Hampstead, and palaces round about you—Southampton House and Montague House.'

'Where you wretches go and fight duels,' cries Mrs. Steele.

'Of which the ladies are the cause!' says her entertainer. 'Madam, is Dick a good swordsman? How charming the *Tatler* is! We all recognised your portrait in the 49th number, and I have been dying to know you ever since I read it. "Aspasia must be allowed to be the first of the beauteous order of love." Doth not the passage run so? "In this accomplished lady love is the constant effect, though it is never the design; yet though her mien carries much more invitation than command, to behold her is an immediate check to loose behaviour, and to love her is a liberal education."'

'Oh, indeed!' says Mrs. Steele, who did not seem to understand a word of what the gentleman was saying.

'Who could fail to be accomplished under such a mistress?' says Mr. St. John, still gallant and bowing.

'Mistress! upon my word, sir!' cries the lady. 'If you mean me, sir, I would have you know that I am the Captain's wife.'

'Sure we all know it,' answers Mr. St. John, keeping his countenance very gravely; and Steele broke in saying, ''Twas not about Mrs. Steele I writ

that paper—though I am sure she is worthy of any compliment I can pay her—but of the Lady Elizabeth Hastings.'

'I hear Mr. Addison is equally famous as a wit and a poet,' says Mr. St. John. 'Is it true that his hand is to be found in your *Tatler*, Mr. Steele?'

'Whether 'tis the sublime or the humorous, no man can come near him,' cries Steele.

'A fig, Dick, for your Mr. Addison;' cries out his lady: 'a gentleman who gives himself such airs and holds his head so high now. I hope your Ladyship thinks as I do: I can't bear those very fair men with white eyelashes—a black man for me.' (All the black men at table applauded, and made Mrs. Steele a bow for this compliment.) 'As for this Mr. Addison,' she went on, 'he comes to dine with the Captain sometimes, never says a word to me, and then they walk upstairs, both tipsy, to a dish of tea. I remember your Mr. Addison when he had but one coat to his back, and that with a patch at the elbow.'

'Indeed—a patch at the elbow! You interest me,' says Mr. St. John. ''Tis charming to hear of one man of letters from the charming wife of another.'

'La, I could tell you ever so much about 'em,' continues the voluble lady. 'What do you think the Captain has got now?—a little hunchback fellow—a little hop-o'-my-thumb creature that he calls a poet—a little Popish brat!'

'Hush! there are two in the room,' whispers her companion.

'Well, I call him Popish because his name is Pope,' says the lady. ''Tis only my joking way. And this little dwarf of a fellow has wrote a pastoral poem—all about shepherds and shepherdesses, you know.'

'A shepherd should have a little crook,' says my mistress, laughing from her end of the table; on which

Mrs. Steele said, 'She did not know, but the Captain brought home this queer little creature when she was in bed with her first boy, and it was a mercy he had come no sooner; and Dick raved about his *genus*, and was always raving about some nonsense or other.'

'Which of the *Tatlers* do you prefer, Mrs. Steele?' asked Mr. St. John.

'I never read but one, and think it all a pack of rubbish, sir,' says the lady. 'Such stuff about Bickerstaffe, and Distaff, and Quarterstaff, as it all is! There's the Captain going on still with the Burgundy —I know he'll be tipsy before he stops—Captain Steele!'

'I drink to your eyes, my dear,' says the Captain, who seemed to think his wife charming, and to receive as genuine all the satiric compliments which Mr. St. John paid her.

All this while the Maid of Honour had been trying to get Mr. Esmond to talk, and no doubt voted him a dull fellow. For, by some mistake, just as he was going to pop into the vacant place, he was placed far away from Beatrix's chair, who sat between his Grace and my Lord Ashburnham, and shrugged her lovely white shoulders, and cast a look as if to say, 'Pity me,' to her cousin. My Lord Duke and his young neighbour were presently in a very animated and close conversation. Mrs. Beatrix could no more help using her eyes than the sun can help shining, and setting those it shines on a-burning. By the time the first course was done the dinner seemed long to Esmond; by the time the soup came he fancied they must have been hours at table; and as for the sweets and jellies he thought they never would be done.

At length the ladies rose, Beatrix throwing a Parthian glance at her duke as she retreated; a fresh bottle and glasses were fetched, and toasts were called.

Mr. St. John asked his Grace the Duke of Hamilton and the company to drink to the health of his Grace the Duke of Brandon. Another lord gave General Webb's health, 'and may he get the command the bravest officer in the world deserves.' Mr. Webb thanked the company, complimented his aide-de-camp, and fought his famous battle over again.

'Il est fatiguant,' whispers Mr. St. John, 'avec sa trompette de Wynendael.'

Captain Steele, who was not of our side, loyally gave the health of the Duke of Marlborough, the greatest General of the age.

'I drink to the greatest General with all my heart,' says Mr. Webb; 'there can be no gainsaying that character of him. My glass goes to the General, and not to the Duke, Mr. Steele.' And the stout old gentleman emptied his bumper; to which Dick replied by filling and emptying a pair of brimmers, one for the General and one for the Duke.

And now his Grace of Hamilton, rising up with flashing eyes (we had all been drinking pretty freely), proposed a toast to the lovely, to the incomparable Mrs. Beatrix Esmond; we all drank it with cheers, and my Lord Ashburnham especially, with a shout of enthusiasm.

'What a pity there is a Duchess of Hamilton!' whispers St. John, who drank more wine and yet was more steady than most of the others, and we entered the drawing-room where the ladies were at their tea. As for poor Dick, we were obliged to leave him alone at the dining table, where he was hiccupping out the lines from the 'Campaign,' in which the greatest poet had celebrated the greatest general in the world; and Harry Esmond found him, half-an-hour afterwards, in a more advanced stage of liquor, and weeping about the treachery of Tom Boxer.

The drawing-room was all dark to poor Harry, in spite of the grand illumination. Beatrix scarce spoke to him. When my Lord Duke went away, she practised upon the next in rank, and plied my young Lord Ashburnham with all the fire of her eyes and the fascinations of her wit. Most of the party were set to cards, and Mr. St. John, after yawning in the face of Mrs. Steele, whom he did not care to pursue any more; and talking in his most brilliant animated way to Lady Castlewood, whom he pronounced to be beautiful, of a far higher order of beauty than her daughter, presently took his leave, and went his way. The rest of the company speedily followed, my Lord Ashburnham the last, throwing fiery glances at the smiling young temptress, who had bewitched more hearts than his in her thrall.

No doubt, as a kinsman of the house, Mr. Esmond thought fit to be the last of all in it; he remained after the coaches had rolled away—after his dowager aunt's chair and flambeaux had marched off in the darkness towards Chelsey, and the town's people had gone to bed, who had been drawn into the square to gape at the unusual assemblage of chairs and chariots, lacqueys and torchmen. The poor mean wretch lingered yet for a few minutes, to see whether the girl would vouchsafe him a smile, or a parting word of consolation. But her enthusiasm of the morning was quite died out, or she chose to be in a different mood. She fell to joking about the dowdy appearance of Lady Betty, and mimicked the vulgarity of Mrs. Steele: and then she put up her little hand to her mouth and yawned, lighted a taper, and shrugged her shoulders, and dropping Mr. Esmond a saucy curtsey, sailed off to bed.

'The day began so well, Henry, that I had hoped it might have ended better,' was all the consolation

that poor Esmond's fond mistress could give him; and as he trudged home through the dark alone, he thought with bitter rage in his heart, and a feeling of almost revolt against the sacrifice he had made:—'She would have me,' thought he, 'had I but a name to give her. But for my promise to her father, I might have my rank and my mistress too.'

I suppose a man's vanity is stronger than any other passion in him; for I blush, even now, as I recall the humiliation of those distant days, the memory of which still smarts, though the fever of balked desire has passed away more than a score of years ago. When the writer's descendants come to read this Memoir, I wonder will they have lived to experience a similar defeat and shame? Will they ever have knelt to a woman, who has listened to them, and played with them, and laughed with them—who beckoning them with lures and caresses, and with Yes smiling from her eyes, has tricked them on to their knees, and turned her back and left them? All this shame Mr. Esmond had to undergo; and he submitted, and revolted, and presently came crouching back for more.

After this feste, my young Lord Ashburnham's coach was for ever rolling in and out of Kensington Square; his lady-mother came to visit Esmond's mistress, and at every assembly in the town, wherever the Maid of Honour made her appearance, you might be pretty sure to see the young gentleman in a new suit every week, and decked out in all the finery that his tailor or embroiderer could furnish for him. My Lord was for ever paying Mr. Esmond compliments; bidding him to dinner, offering him horses to ride, and giving him a thousand uncouth marks of respect and goodwill. At last, one night at the coffee-house, whither my Lord came considerably flushed and

excited with drink, he rushes up to Mr. Esmond, and cries out, 'Give me joy, my dearest Colonel: I am the happiest of men.'

'The happiest of men needs no dearest Colonel to give him joy,' says Mr. Esmond. 'What is the cause of this supreme felicity?'

'Haven't you heard?' says he. 'Don't you know? I thought the family told you everything: the adorable Beatrix hath promised to be mine.'

'What!' cries out Mr. Esmond, who had spent happy hours with Beatrix that very morning—had writ verses for her, that she had sung at the harpsichord.

'Yes,' says he; 'I waited on her to-day. I saw you walking towards Knightsbridge as I passed in my coach; and she looked so lovely, and spoke so kind, that I couldn't help going down on my knees, and—and—sure I am the happiest of men in all the world; and I'm very young; but she says I shall get older: and you know I shall be of age in four months; and there's very little difference between us; and I'm so happy. I should like to treat the company to something. Let us have a bottle—a dozen bottles—and drink the health of the finest woman in England.'

Esmond left the young lord tossing off bumper after bumper, and strolled away to Kensington to ask whether the news was true. 'Twas only too sure: his mistress' sad, compassionate face told him the story: and then she related what particulars of it she knew, and how my young lord had made his offer, half-an-hour after Esmond went away that morning, and in the very room where the song lay yet on the harpsichord, which Esmond had writ, and they had sung together.

BOOK III

CONTAINING THE END OF MR ESMOND'S ADVENTURES IN ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

I COME TO AN END OF MY BATTLES AND BRUISES

That feverish desire to gain a little reputation which Esmond had had, left him now perhaps that he had attained some portion of his wish, and the great motive of his ambition was over. His desire for military honour was that it might raise him in Beatrix's eyes. 'Twas, next to nobility and wealth, the only kind of rank she valued. It was the stake quickest won or lost too; for law is a very long game that requires a life to practise; and to be distinguished in letters or the Church would not have forwarded the poor gentleman's plans in the least. So he had no suit to play but the red one, and he played it; and this, in truth, was the reason of his speedy promotion; for he exposed himself more than most gentlemen do, and risked more to win more. Is he the only man that hath set his life against a stake which may be not worth the winning? Another risks his life (and his honour, too, sometimes) against a bundle of bank-notes, or a yard of blue riband, or a seat in Parliament; and some for the mere pleasure and excitement of the sport; as a

field of a hundred huntsmen will do, each out-bawling and out-galloping the other at the tail of a dirty fox, that is to be the prize of the foremost happy conqueror.

When he heard this news of Beatrix's engagement in marriage, Colonel Esmond knocked under to his fate, and resolved to surrender his sword, that could win him nothing now he cared for; and in this dismal frame of mind he determined to retire from the regiment, to the great delight of the Captain next in rank to him, who happened to be a young gentleman of good fortune, who eagerly paid Mr. Esmond a thousand guineas for his majority in Webb's regiment, and was knocked on the head the next campaign. Perhaps Esmond would not have been sorry to share his fate; he was more the Knight of the Woeful Countenance than ever he had been. His moodiness must have made him perfectly odious to his friends under the tents, who like a jolly fellow, and laugh at a melancholy warrior always sighing after Dulcinea at home.

Both the ladies of Castlewood approved of Mr. Esmond quitting the army, and his kind General coincided in his wish of retirement and helped in the transfer of his commission, which brought a pretty sum into his pocket. But when the Commander-in-Chief came home, and was forced, in spite of himself, to appoint Lieutenant-General Webb to the command of a division of the army in Flanders, the Lieutenant-General prayed Colonel Esmond so urgently to be his aide-de-camp and military secretary, that Esmond could not resist his kind patron's entreaties, and again took the field, not attached to any regiment, but under Webb's orders. What must have been the continued agonies of fears * and apprehensions which racked the gentle breasts of wives and matrons in those dreadful

* What indeed? Psm. xci. 2, 3, 7.—R. E.

days, when every *Gazette* brought accounts of deaths and battles, and when, the present anxiety over, and the beloved person escaped, the doubt still remained that a battle might be fought, possibly, of which the next Flanders letter would bring the account ; so they, the poor tender creatures, had to go on sickening and trembling through the whole campaign. Whatever these terrors were on the part of Esmond's mistress (and that tenderest of women must have felt them most keenly for both her sons, as she called them), she never allowed them outwardly to appear, but hid her apprehension as she did her charities and devotion. 'Twas only by chance that Esmond, wandering in Kensington, found his mistress coming out of a mean cottage there, and heard that she had a score of poor retainers, whom she visited and comforted in their sickness and poverty, and who blessed her daily. She attended the early church daily (though of a Sunday, especially, she encouraged and advanced all sorts of cheerfulness and innocent gaiety in her little household) : and by notes entered into a table-book of hers at this time, and devotional compositions writ with a sweet artless fervour, such as the best divines could not surpass, showed how fond her heart was, how humble and pious her spirit, what pangs of apprehension she endured silently, and with what a faithful reliance she committed the care of those she loved to the awful Dispenser of death and life.

As for her Ladyship at Chelsey, Esmond's newly adopted mother, she was now of an age when the danger of any second party doth not disturb the rest much. She cared for trumps more than for most things in life. She was firm enough in her own faith, but no longer very bitter against ours. She had a very good-natured, easy French director, Monsieur Gauthier by name, who was a gentleman of the world, and would

take a hand of cards with Dean Atterbury, my lady's neighbour at Chelsey, and was well with all the High Church party. No doubt Monsieur Gauthier knew what Esmond's peculiar position was, for he corresponded with Holt, and always treated Colonel Esmond with particular respect and kindness; but for good reasons the Colonel and the Abbé never spoke on this matter together, and so they remained perfect good friends.

All the frequenters of my Lady of Chelsey's house were of the Tory and High Church party. Madam Beatrix was as frantic about the King as her elderly kinswoman: she wore his picture on her heart; she had a piece of his hair; she vowed he was the most injured, and gallant, and accomplished, and unfortunate, and beautiful of princes. Steele, who quarrelled with very many of his Tory friends, but never with Esmond, used to tell the Colonel that his kinswoman's house was a rendezvous of Tory intrigues; that Gauthier was a spy; that Atterbury was a spy; that letters were constantly going from that house to the Queen at St. Germains; on which Esmond, laughing, would reply, that they used to say in the army the Duke of Marlborough was a spy too, and as much in correspondence with that family as any Jesuit. And without entering very eagerly into the controversy, Esmond had frankly taken the side of his family. It seemed to him that King James the Third was undoubtedly King of England by right; and at his sister's death it would be better to have him than a foreigner over us. No man admired King William more; a hero and a conqueror, the bravest, justest, wisest of men—but 'twas by the sword he conquered the country, and held and governed it by the very same right that the great Cromwell held it, who was truly and greatly a sovereign. But that a foreign

despotic prince, out of Germany, who happened to be descended from King James the First, should take possession of this empire, seemed to Mr. Esmond a monstrous injustice—at least, every Englishman had a right to protest, and the English prince, the heir-at-law, the first of all. What man of spirit with such a cause would not back it? What man of honour with such a crown to win would not fight for it? But that race was destined. That Prince had himself against him, an enemy he could not overcome. He never dared to draw his sword, though he had it. He let his chances slip by as he lay in the lap of opera-girls, or snivelled at the knees of priests asking pardon; and the blood of heroes, and the devotedness of honest hearts, and endurance, courage, fidelity, were all spent for him in vain.

But let us return to my Lady of Chelsey, who, when her son Esmond announced to her Ladyship that he proposed to make the ensuing campaign, took leave of him with perfect alacrity, and was down to piquet with her gentlewoman before he had well quitted the room on his last visit. 'Tierce to a king' were the last words he ever heard her say: the game of life was pretty nearly over for the good lady, and three months afterwards she took to her bed, where she flickered out without any pain, so the Abbé Gauthier wrote over to Mr. Esmond, then with his General on the frontier of France. The Lady Castlewood was with her at her ending, and had written too, but these letters must have been taken by a privateer in the packet that brought them; for Esmond knew nothing of their contents until his return to England.

My Lady Castlewood had left everything to Colonel Esmond 'as a reparation for the wrong done to him;' 'twas writ in her will. But her fortune was not much, for it never had been large, and the honest Viscountess

had wisely sunk most of the money she had upon an annuity which terminated with her life. However, there was the house and furniture, plate and pictures at Chelsey, and a sum of money lying at her merchant's, Sir Josiah Child, which altogether would realise a sum of near three hundred pounds per annum, so that Mr. Esmond found himself, if not rich, at least easy for life. Likewise there were the famous diamonds which had been said to be worth fabulous sums, though the goldsmith pronounced they would fetch no more than four thousand pounds. These diamonds, however, Colonel Esmond reserved, having a special use for them ; but the Chelsey house, plate, goods, &c., with the exception of a few articles which he kept back, were sold by his orders ; and the sums resulting from the sale invested in the public securities so as to realise the aforesaid annual income of three hundred pounds.

Having now something to leave, he made a will and despatched it home. The army was now in presence of the enemy ; and a great battle expected every day. 'Twas known that the General-in-Chief was in disgrace, and the parties at home strong against him, and there was no stroke this great and resolute player would not venture to recall his fortune when it seemed desperate. Frank Castlewood was with Colonel Esmond ; his General having gladly taken the young nobleman on to his staff. His studies of fortification at Bruxelles were over by this time. The fort he was besieging had yielded, I believe, and my Lord had not only marched in with flying colours, but marched out again. He used to tell his boyish wickednesses with admirable humour, and was the most charming young scapegrace in the army.

'Tis needless to say that Colonel Esmond had left every penny of his little fortune to this boy. It was

the Colonel's firm conviction that the next battle would put an end to him: for he felt aweary of the sun, and quite ready to bid that and the earth farewell. Frank would not listen to his comrade's gloomy forebodings, but swore they would keep his birthday at Castlewood that autumn, after the campaign. He had heard of the engagement at home. 'If Prince Eugene goes to London,' says Frank, 'and Trix can get hold of him, she'll jilt Ashburnham for his Highness. I tell you, she used to make eyes at the Duke of Marlborough, when she was only fourteen, and ogling poor little Blandford. *I* wouldn't marry her, Harry—no, not if her eyes were twice as big. I'll take my fun. I'll enjoy for the next three years every possible pleasure. I'll sow my wild oats then, and marry some quiet, steady, modest, sensible Viscountess; hunt my harriers; and settle down at Castlewood. Perhaps I'll represent the county—no, damme, *you* shall represent the county. You have the brains of the family. By the Lord, my dear old Harry, you have the best head and the kindest heart in all the army; and every man says so—and when the Queen dies, and the King comes back, why shouldn't you go to the House of Commons, and be a Minister, and be made a Peer, and that sort of thing? *You* be shot in the next action! I wager a dozen of Burgundy you are not touched. Mohun is well of his wound. He is always with Corporal John now. As soon as ever I see his ugly face I'll spit in it. I took lessons of Father—of Captain Holt at Bruxelles. What a man that is! He knows everything.' Esmond bade Frank have a care; that Father Holt's knowledge was rather dangerous; not, indeed, knowing as yet how far the Father had pushed his instructions with his young pupil.

The gazetteers and writers, both of the French and

English side, have given accounts sufficient of that bloody battle of Blaregnies or Malplaquet, which was the last and the hardest earned of the victories of the great Duke of Marlborough. In that tremendous combat near upon two hundred and fifty thousand men were engaged, more than thirty thousand of whom were slain or wounded (the Allies lost twice as many men as they killed of the French, whom they conquered): and this dreadful slaughter very likely took place because a great General's credit was shaken at home, and he thought to restore it by a victory. If such were the motives which induced the Duke of Marlborough to venture that prodigious stake, and desperately sacrifice thirty thousand brave lives, so that he might figure once more in a *Gazette*, and hold his places and pensions a little longer, the event defeated the dreadful and selfish design, for the victory was purchased at a cost which no nation, greedy of glory as it may be, would willingly pay for any triumph. The gallantry of the French was as remarkable as the furious bravery of their assailants. We took a few score of their flags, and a few pieces of their artillery; but we left twenty thousand of the bravest soldiers of the world round about the intrenched lines, from which the enemy was driven. He retreated in perfect good order; the panic-spell seemed to be broke under which the French had laboured ever since the disaster of Hochstedt; and, fighting now on the threshold of their country, they showed an heroic ardour of resistance, such as had never met us in the course of their aggressive war. Had the battle been more successful, the conqueror might have got the price for which he waged it. As it was (and justly, I think), the party adverse to the Duke in England were indignant at the lavish extravagance of slaughter, and demanded more eagerly than ever

the recall of a chief whose cupidity and desperation might urge him further still. After this bloody fight of Malplaquet, I can answer for it, that in the Dutch quarters and our own, and amongst the very regiments and commanders whose gallantry was most conspicuous upon this frightful day of carnage, the general cry was, that there was enough of the war. The French were driven back into their own boundary, and all their conquests and booty of Flanders disgorged. As for the Prince of Savoy, with whom our Commander-in-Chief, for reasons of his own, consorted more closely than ever, 'twas known that he was animated not merely by a political hatred, but by personal rage against the old French King: the Imperial Generalissimo never forgot the slight put by Lewis upon the Abbé de Savoie; and in the humiliation or ruin of His Most Christian Majesty, the Holy Roman Emperor found his account. But what were these quarrels to us, the free citizens of England and Holland? Despot as he was, the French monarch was yet the chief of European civilisation, more venerable in his age and misfortunes than at the period of his most splendid successes; whilst his opponent was but a semi-barbarous tyrant, with a pillaging, murderous horde of Croats and Pandours, composing a half of his army, filling our camp with their strange figures, bearded like the miscreant Turks their neighbours, and carrying into Christian warfare their native heathen habits of rapine, lust, and murder. Why should the best blood in England and France be shed in order that the Holy Roman and Apostolic master of these ruffians should have his revenge over the Christian King? And it was to this end we were fighting; for this that every village and family in England was deploring the death of beloved sons and fathers. We dared not speak to each other, even

at table, of Malplaquet, so frightful were the gaps left in our army by the cannon of that bloody action. 'Twas heartrending for an officer who had a heart to look down his line on a parade-day afterwards, and miss hundreds of faces of comrades—humble or of high rank—that had gathered but yesterday full of courage and cheerfulness round the torn and blackened flags. Where were our friends? As the great Duke reviewed us, riding along our lines with his fine suite of prancing aides-de-camp and generals, stopping here and there to thank an officer with those eager smiles and bows of which his Grace was always lavish, scarce a huzzah could be got for him, though Cadogan, with an oath, rode up and cried, 'D—— you, why don't you cheer?' But the men had no heart for that: not one of them but was thinking, 'Where's my comrade?—where's my brother that fought by me, or my dear captain that led me yesterday?' 'Twas the most gloomy pageant I ever looked on; and the 'Te Deum' sung by our chaplains, the most woeful and dreary satire.

Esmond's General added one more to the many marks of honour which he had received in the front of a score of battles, and got a wound in the groin, which laid him on his back; and you may be sure he consoled himself by abusing the Commander-in-Chief, as he lay groaning: 'Corporal John's as fond of me,' he used to say, 'as King David was of General Uriah; and so he always gives me the post of danger.' He persisted, to his dying day, in believing that the Duke intended he should be beat at Wynendael, and sent him purposely with a small force, hoping that he might be knocked on the head there. Esmond and Frank Castlewood both escaped without hurt, though the division which our General commanded suffered even more than any other,

having to sustain not only the fury of the enemy's cannonade, which was very hot and well-served, but the furious and repeated charges of the famous Maison du Roy, which we had to receive and beat off again and again, with volleys of shot and hedges of iron, and our four lines of musqueteers and pikemen. They said the King of England charged us no less than twelve times that day, along with the French Household. Esmond's late regiment, General Webb's own Fusileers, served in the division which their Colonel commanded. The General was thrice in the centre of the square of the Fusileers, calling the fire at the French charges, and, after the action, his Grace the Duke of Berwick sent his compliments to his old regiment and their Colonel for their behaviour on the field.

We drank my Lord Castlewood's health and majority, the 25th of September, the army being then before Mons: and here Colonel Esmond was not so fortunate as he had been in actions much more dangerous, and was hit by a spent ball just above the place where his former wound was, which caused the old wound to open again, fever, spitting of blood, and other ugly symptoms, to ensue; and, in a word, brought him near to death's door. The kind lad, his kinsman, attended his elder comrade with a very praiseworthy affectionateness and care until he was pronounced out of danger by the doctors, when Frank went off, passed the winter at Bruxelles, and besieged, no doubt, some other fortress there. Very few lads would have given up their pleasures so long and so gaily as Frank did; his cheerful prattle soothed many long days of Esmond's pain and languor. Frank was supposed to be still at his kinsman's bedside for a month after he had left it, for letters came from his mother at home full of thanks to the younger gentleman for

his care of his elder brother (so it pleased Esmond's mistress now affectionately to style him); nor was Mr. Esmond in a hurry to undeceive her, when the good young fellow was gone for his Christmas holiday. It was as pleasant to Esmond on his couch to watch the young man's pleasure at the idea of being free, as to note his simple efforts to disguise his satisfaction on going away. There are days when a flask of champagne at a cabaret, and a red-cheeked partner to share it, are too strong temptations for any young fellow of spirit. I am not going to play the moralist, and cry 'Fie!' For ages past, I know how old men preach, and what young men practise; and that patriarchs have had their weak moments too, long since Father Noah toppled over after discovering the vine. Frank went off, then, to his pleasures at Bruxelles, in which capital many young fellows of our army declared they found infinitely greater diversion even than in London: and Mr. Henry Esmond remained in his sick room where he writ a fine comedy, that his mistress pronounced to be sublime, and that was acted no less than three successive nights in London in the next year.

Here, as he lay nursing himself, ubiquitous Mr. Holt reappeared, and stopped a whole month at Mons, where he not only won over Colonel Esmond to the King's side in politics (that side being always held by the Esmond family); but where he endeavoured to re-open the controversial question between the Churches once more, and to recall Esmond to that religion in which, in his infancy, he had been baptized. Holt was a casuist, both dexterous and learned, and presented the case between the English Church and his own in such a way that those who granted his premises ought certainly to allow his conclusions.

He touched on Esmond's delicate state of health,

chance of dissolution, and so forth; and enlarged upon the immense benefits that the sick man was likely to forego—benefits which the Church of England did not deny to those of the Roman Communion, as how should she, being derived from that Church, and only an offshoot from it? But Mr. Esmond said that his Church was the Church of his country, and to that he chose to remain faithful: other people were welcome to worship and to subscribe any other set of articles, whether at Rome or at Augsburg. But if the good Father meant that Esmond should join the Roman communion for fear of consequences, and that all England ran the risk of being damned for heresy, Esmond, for one, was perfectly willing to take his chance of the penalty along with the countless millions of his fellow-countrymen, who were bred in the same faith, and along with some of the noblest, the truest, the purest, the wisest, the most pious and learned men and women in the world.

As for the political question, in that Mr. Esmond could agree with the Father much more readily, and had come to the same conclusion, though, perhaps, by a different way. The right divine, about which Dr. Sacheverel and the High Church party in England were just now making a bother, they were welcome to hold as they chose. If Richard Cromwell and his father before him had been crowned and anointed (and bishops enough would have been found to do it), it seemed to Mr. Esmond that they would have had the right divine just as much as any Plantagenet, or Tudor, or Stuart. But the desire of the country being unquestionably for an hereditary monarchy, Esmond thought an English king out of St. Germains was better and fitter than a German Prince from Herrenhausen, and that if he failed to satisfy the

nation, some other Englishman might be found to take his place; and so, though with no frantic enthusiasm, or worship of that monstrous pedigree which the Tories chose to consider divine, he was ready to say, 'God save King James!' when Queen Anne went the way of kings and commoners.

'I fear, Colonel, you are no better than a republican at heart,' says the priest, with a sigh.

'I am an Englishman,' says Harry, 'and take my country as I find her. The will of the nation being for Church and King, I am for Church and King too; but English Church and English King; and that is why your Church isn't mine, though your King is.'

Though they lost the day at Malplaquet, it was the French who were elated by that action, whilst the conquerors were dispirited by it; and the enemy gathered together a larger army than ever, and made prodigious efforts for the next campaign. Marshal Berwick was with the French this year; and we heard that Mareschal Villars was still suffering of his wound, was eager to bring our Duke to action, and vowed he would fight us in his coach. Young Castlewood came flying back from Bruxelles as soon as he heard that fighting was to begin; and the arrival of the Chevalier de St. George was announced about May. 'It's the King's third campaign, and it's mine,' Frank liked saying. He was come back a greater Jacobite than ever, and Esmond suspected that some fair conspirators at Bruxelles had been inflaming the young man's ardour. Indeed, he owned that he had a message from the Queen, Beatrix's godmother, who had given her name to Frank's sister the year before he and his sovereign were born.

However desirous Mareschal Villars might be to fight, my Lord Duke did not seem disposed to indulge him this campaign. Last year his Grace had been all

for the Whigs and Hanoverians; but finding, on going to England, his country cold towards himself, and the people in a ferment of High Church loyalty, the Duke comes back to his army cooled towards the Hanoverians, cautious with the Imperialists, and particularly civil and polite towards the Chevalier de St. George. 'Tis certain that messengers and letters were continually passing between his Grace and his brave nephew, the Duke of Berwick, in the opposite camp. No man's caresses were more opportune than his Grace's, and no man ever uttered expressions of regard and affection more generously. He professed to Monsieur de Torcy, so Mr. St. John told the writer, quite an eagerness to be cut in pieces for the exiled Queen and her family; nay more, I believe, this year he parted with a portion of the most precious part of himself—his money—which he sent over to the royal exiles. Mr. Tunstal, who was in the Prince's service, was twice or thrice in and out of our camp; the French, in theirs of Arlieu and about Arras. A little river, the Canihe I think 'twas called (but this is writ away from books and Europe; and the only map the writer hath of these scenes of his youth, bears no mark of this little stream), divided our picquets from the enemy's. Our sentries talked across the stream, when they could make themselves understood to each other, and when they could not, grinned, and handed each other their brandy-flasks or their pouches of tobacco. And one fine day of June, riding thither with the officer who visited the outposts (Colonel Esmond was taking an airing on horseback, being too weak for military duty), they came to this river, where a number of English and Scots were assembled, talking to the good-natured enemy on the other side.

Esmond was especially amused with the talk of one

long fellow, with a great curling red moustache, and blue eyes, that was half-a-dozen inches taller than his swarthy little comrades on the French side of the stream, and being asked by the Colonel, saluted him, and said that he belonged to the Royal Cravats.

From his way of saying 'Royal Cravat,' Esmond at once knew that the fellow's tongue had first wagged on the banks of the Liffey, and not the Loire; and the poor soldier—a deserter probably—did not like to venture very deep into French conversation, lest his unlucky brogue should peep out. He chose to restrict himself to such few expressions in the French language as he thought he had mastered easily; and his attempt at disguise was infinitely amusing. Mr. Esmond whistled Lillibullero, at which Teague's eyes began to twinkle, and then flung him a dollar, when the poor boy broke out with a 'God bless—that is, Dieu bénisse votre honor,' that would infallibly have sent him to the provost-marshal had he been on our side of the river.

Whilst this parley was going on, three officers on horseback, on the French side, appeared at some little distance, and stopped as if eyeing us, when one of them left the other two, and rode close up to us who were by the stream. 'Look, look!' says the Royal Cravat, with great agitation, 'pas lui, that's he; not him, l'autre,' and pointed to the distant officer on a chestnut horse, with a cuirass shining in the sun, and over it a broad blue ribbon.

'Please to take Mr. Hamilton's services to my Lord Marlborough—my Lord Duke,' says the gentleman in English; and looking to see that the party were not hostilely disposed, he added, with a smile, 'There's a friend of yours, gentlemen, yonder; he bids me to say that he saw some of your faces on the 11th of September last year.'

As the gentleman spoke, the other two officers rode up, and came quite close. We knew at once who it was. It was the King, then two-and-twenty years old, tall and slim, with deep brown eyes, that looked melancholy, though his lips wore a smile. We took off our hats and saluted him. No man, sure, could see for the first time, without emotion, the youthful inheritor of so much fame and misfortune. It seemed to Mr. Esmond that the Prince was not unlike young Castlewood, whose age and figure he resembled. The Chevalier de St. George acknowledged the salute, and looked at us hard. Even the idlers on our side of the river set up a hurrah. As for the Royal Cravat, he ran to the Prince's stirrup, knelt down and kissed his boot, and bawled and looked a hundred ejaculations and blessings. The Prince bade the aide-de-camp give him a piece of money ; and when the party saluting us had ridden away, Cravat spat upon the piece of gold by way of benediction, and swaggered away, pouching his coin and twirling his honest carroty moustache.

The officer in whose company Esmond was, the same little captain of Handyside's regiment, Mr Sterne, who had proposed the garden at Lille, when my Lord Mohun and Esmond had their affair, was an Irishman too, and as brave a little soul as ever wore a sword. 'Bedad,' says Roger Sterne, 'that long fellow spoke French so beautiful that I shouldn't have known he wasn't a foreigner, till he broke out with his hulla-ballooing, and only an Irish calf can bellow like that.' And Roger made another remark in his wild way, in which there was sense as well as absurdity : 'If that young gentleman,' says he, 'would but ride over to our camp, instead of Villars's, toss up his hat and say, "Here am I, the King, who'll follow me?" by the Lord, Esmond, the whole army would rise and carry

him home again, and beat Villars, and take Paris by the way.'

The news of the Prince's visit was all through the camp quickly, and scores of ours went down in hopes to see him. Major Hamilton, whom we had talked with, sent back by a trumpet several silver pieces for officers with us. Mr. Esmond received one of these ; and that medal, and a recompense not uncommon amongst Princes, were the only rewards he ever had from a Royal person whom he endeavoured not very long after to serve.

Esmond quitted the army almost immediately after this, following his General home ; and, indeed, being advised to travel in the fine weather and attempt to take no further part in the campaign. But he heard from the army, that of the many who crowded to see the Chevalier de St. George, Frank Castlewood had made himself most conspicuous : my Lord Viscount riding across the little stream bare-headed to where the Prince was, and dismounting and kneeling before him to do him homage. Some said that the Prince had actually knighted him, but my Lord denied that statement, though he acknowledged the rest of the story, and said : 'From having been out of favour with Corporal John,' as he called the Duke, 'before his Grace warned him not to commit those follies, and smiled on him cordially ever after.'

'And he was so kind to me,' Frank writ, 'that I thought I would put in a good word for Master Harry, but when I mentioned your name he looked as black as thunder, and said he had never heard of you.'

CHAPTER II

I GO HOME, AND HARP ON THE OLD STRING

AFTER quitting Mons and the army, and as he was waiting for a packet at Ostend, Esmond had a letter from his young kinsman Castlewood at Bruxelles, conveying intelligence whereof Frank besought him to be the bearer to London, and which caused Colonel Esmond no small anxiety.

The young scapegrace, being one-and-twenty years old, and being anxious to sow his 'wild otes,' as he wrote, had married Mademoiselle de Wertheim, daughter of Count de Wertheim, Chamberlain to the Emperor, and having a post in the household of the Governor of the Netherlands. 'P.S.,' the young gentleman wrote: 'Clotilda is *older than me*, which perhaps may be objected to her: but I am so *old a raik* that the age makes no difference, and I am *determined* to reform. We were married at St. Gudule, by Father Holt. She is heart and soul for the *good cause*. And here the cry is *Vif-le-Roy*, which my mother will *join in*, and Trix *too*. Break this news to 'em gently: and tell Mr. Finch, my agent, to press the people for their rents, and send me the *ryno* anyhow. Clotilda sings, and plays on the spinet *beautifully*. She is a fair beauty. And if it's a son, you shall stand *Godfather*. I'm going to leave the army, having had *enuf of soldiering;* and my Lord Duke *recommends* me. I shall pass the winter here: and stop at least until Clo's lying-in. I call her *old Clo*, but nobody else shall. She is the cleverest woman in all Bruxelles: under-

standing painting, music, poetry, and perfect at *cookery and puddens*. I borded with the Count, that's how I came to know her. There are four Counts her brothers. One an Abbey—three with the Prince's army. They have a lawsuit for *an immence fortune:* but are now in *a pore way*. Break this to Mother, who'll take anything from *you*. And write, and bid Finch write *amediately*. Hostel de l'Aigle Noire, Bruxelles, Flanders.'

So Frank had married a Roman Catholic lady, and an heir was expected, and Mr. Esmond was to carry this intelligence to his mistress at London. 'Twas a difficult embassy; and the Colonel felt not a little tremor as he neared the capital.

He reached his inn late, and sent a messenger to Kensington to announce his arrival and visit the next morning. The messenger brought back news that the Court was at Windsor, and the fair Beatrix absent and engaged in her duties there. Only Esmond's mistress remained in her house at Kensington. She appeared in Court but once in the year; Beatrix was quite the mistress and ruler of the little mansion, inviting the company thither, and engaging in every conceivable frolic of town pleasure; whilst her mother, acting as the young lady's protectress and elder sister, pursued her own path, which was quite modest and secluded.

As soon as ever Esmond was dressed (and he had been awake long before the town), he took a coach for Kensington, and reached it so early that he met his dear mistress coming home from morning prayers. She carried her prayer-book, never allowing a footman to bear it, as everybody else did: and it was by this simple sign Esmond knew what her occupation had been. He called to the coachman to stop, and jumped out as she looked towards him. She wore her hood as usual, and she turned quite pale when she saw him.

To feel that kind little hand near to his heart seemed to give him strength. They were soon at the door of her Ladyship's house—and within it.

With a sweet sad smile she took his hand and kissed it.

'How ill you have been: how weak you look, my dear Henry!' she said.

'Tis certain the Colonel did look like a ghost, except that ghosts do not look very happy, 'tis said. Esmond always felt so on returning to her after absence, indeed whenever he looked in her sweet kind face.

'I am come back to be nursed by my family,' says he. 'If Frank had not taken care of me after my wound, very likely I should have gone altogether.'

'Poor Frank, good Frank!' says his mother. 'You'll always be kind to him, my Lord,' she went on. 'The poor child never knew he was doing you a wrong.'

'My Lord!' cries out Colonel Esmond. 'What do you mean, dear lady?'

'I am no lady,' says she; 'I am Rachel Esmond, Francis Esmond's widow, my Lord. I cannot bear that title. Would we never had taken it from him who has it now. But we did all in our power, Henry: we did all in our power; and my Lord and I—that is'——

'Who told you this tale, dearest lady?' asked the Colonel.

'Have you not had the letter I writ you? I writ to you at Mons directly I heard it,' says Lady Esmond.

'And from whom?' again asked Colonel Esmond —and his mistress then told him that on her deathbed the Dowager Countess, sending for her, had presented her with this dismal secret as a legacy. ''Twas very malicious of the Dowager,' Lady Esmond said, 'to

have had it so long, and to have kept the truth from me.' 'Cousin Rachel,' she said — and Esmond's mistress could not forbear smiling as she told the story—'Cousin Rachel,' cries the Dowager, 'I have sent for you, as the doctors say I may go off any day in this dysentery; and to ease my conscience of a great load that has been on it. You always have been a poor creature and unfit for great honour, and what I have to say won't, therefore, affect you so much. You must know, Cousin Rachel, that I have left my house, plate, and furniture, three thousand pounds in money, and my diamonds that my late revered Saint and Sovereign, King James, presented me with, to my Lord Viscount Castlewood.'

'To my Frank?' says Lady Castlewood: 'I was in hopes'——

'To Viscount Castlewood, my dear; Viscount Castlewood and Baron Esmond of Shandon in the Kingdom of Ireland, Earl and Marquis of Esmond under patent of His Majesty King James the Second, conferred upon my husband the late Marquis—for I am Marchioness of Esmond before God and man.'

'And have you left poor Harry nothing, dear Marchioness'? asks Lady Castlewood (she hath told me the story completely since with her quite arch way; the most charming any woman ever had: and I set down the narrative here at length, so as to have done with it). 'And have you left poor Harry nothing?' asks my dear lady: 'for you know, Henry,' she says with her sweet smile, 'I used always to pity Esau—and I think I am on his side—though papa tried very hard to convince me the other way.'

'Poor Harry!' says the old lady. 'So you want something left to poor Harry: he,—he! (reach me the drops, Cousin). Well, then, my dear, since you want poor Harry to have a fortune, you must under-

stand that ever since the year 1691, a week after the battle of the Boyne, where the Prince of Orange defeated his royal sovereign and father, for which crime he is now suffering in flames (ugh! ugh!), Henry Esmond hath been Marquis of Esmond and Earl of Castlewood in the United Kingdom, and Baron and Viscount Castlewood of Shandon in Ireland, and a Baronet—and his eldest son will be, by courtesy, styled Earl of Castlewood—he! he! What do you think of that, my dear?'

'Gracious mercy! how long have you known this?' cries the other lady (thinking perhaps that the old Marchioness was wandering in her wits).

'My husband, before he was converted, was a wicked wretch,' the sick sinner continued. 'When he was in the Low Countries he seduced a weaver's daughter; and added to his wickedness by marrying her. And then he came to this country and married me—a poor girl—a poor innocent young thing—I say,'—'though she was past forty, you know, Harry, when she married: and as for being innocent——' 'Well,' she went on, 'I knew nothing of my Lord's wickedness for three years after our marriage, and after the burial of our poor little boy I had it done over again, my dear: I had myself married by Father Holt in Castlewood chapel, as soon as ever I heard the creature was dead—and having a great illness then, arising from another sad disappointment I had, the priest came and told me that my Lord had a son before our marriage, and that the child was at nurse in England; and I consented to let the brat be brought home, and a queer little melancholy child it was when it came.

'Our intention was to make a priest of him: and he was bred for this, until you perverted him from it, you wicked woman. And I had again hopes of giving

an heir to my Lord, when he was called away upon the King's business, and died fighting gloriously at the Boyne water.

'Should I be disappointed—I owed your husband no love, my dear, for he had jilted me in the most scandalous way—I thought there would be time to declare the little weaver's son for the true heir. But I was carried off to prison, where your husband was so kind to me—urging all his friends to obtain my release, and using all his credit in my favour—that I relented towards him, especially as my director counselled me to be silent; and that it was for the good of the King's service that the title of our family should continue with your husband the late Viscount, whereby his fidelity would be always secured to the King. And a proof of this is, that a year before your husband's death, when he thought of taking a place under the Prince of Orange, Mr. Holt went to him, and told him what the state of the matter was, and obliged him to raise a large sum for His Majesty, and engaged him in the true cause so heartily, that we were sure of his support on any day when it should be considered advisable to attack the usurper. Then his sudden death came; and there was a thought of declaring the truth. But 'twas determined to be best for the King's service to let the title still go with the younger branch; and there's no sacrifice a Castlewood wouldn't make for that cause, my dear.

'As for Colonel Esmond, he knew the truth already.' ('And then, Harry,' my mistress said, 'she told me of what had happened at my dear husband's death-bed.') 'He doth not intend to take the title, though it belongs to him. But it eases my conscience that you should know the truth, my dear. And your son is lawfully Viscount Castlewood so long as his cousin doth not claim the rank.'

This was the substance of the Dowager's revelation. Dean Atterbury had knowledge of it, Lady Castlewood said, and Esmond very well knows how: that divine being the clergyman for whom the late lord had sent on his death-bed; and when Lady Castlewood would instantly have written to her son, and conveyed the truth to him, the Dean's advice was that a letter should be writ to Colonel Esmond rather: that the matter should be submitted to his decision, by which alone the rest of the family were bound to abide.

'And can my dearest lady doubt what that will be?' says the Colonel.

'It rests with you, Harry, as the head of our house.'

'It was settled twelve years since, by my dear lord's bedside,' says Colonel Esmond. 'The children must know nothing of this. Frank and his heirs after him must bear our name. 'Tis his rightfully: I have not even a proof of that marriage of my father and mother, though my poor lord, on his death-bed, told me that Father Holt had brought such a proof to Castlewood. I would not seek it when I was abroad. I went and looked at my poor mother's grave in her convent. What matter to her now? No court of law on earth, upon my mere word, would deprive my Lord Viscount and set me up. I am the head of the house, dear lady; but Frank is Viscount of Castlewood still. And rather than disturb him, I would turn monk, or disappear in America.'

As he spoke so to his dearest mistress, for whom he would have been willing to give up his life, or to make any sacrifice any day, the fond creature flung herself down on her knees before him, and kissed both his hands in an outbreak of passionate love and gratitude, such as could not but melt his heart, and make him feel very proud and thankful that God had given him

the power to show his love for her, and to prove it by some little sacrifice on his own part. To be able to bestow benefits or happiness on those one loves is sure the greatest blessing conferred upon a man—and what wealth or name, or gratification of ambition or vanity, could compare with the pleasure Esmond now had of being able to confer some kindness upon his best and dearest friends?

'Dearest saint,' says he—'purest soul, that has had so much to suffer, that has blest the poor lonely orphan with such a treasure of love! 'Tis for me to kneel, not for you; 'tis for me to be thankful that I can make you happy. Hath my life any other aim? Blessed be God that I can serve you! What pleasure, think you, could all the world give me compared to that?'

'Don't raise me,' she said, in a wild way, to Esmond, who would have lifted her. 'Let me kneel—let me kneel, and—and—worship you.'

Before such a partial judge as Esmond's dear mistress owned herself to be, any cause which he might plead was sure to be given in his favour; and accordingly he found little difficulty in reconciling her to the news whereof he was bearer, of her son's marriage to a foreign lady, Papist though she was. Lady Castlewood never could be brought to think so ill of that religion as other people in England thought of it: she held that ours was undoubtedly a branch of the Catholic Church, but that the Roman was one of the main stems, on which, no doubt, many errors had been grafted (she was, for a woman, extraordinarily well versed in this controversy, having acted, as a girl, as secretary to her father, the late Dean, and written many of his sermons, under his dictation): and if Frank had chosen to marry a lady of the Church of

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South Europe, as she would call the Roman communion, there was no need why she should not welcome her as a daughter-in-law: and accordingly she wrote to her new daughter a very pretty, touching letter (as Esmond thought, who had cognisance of it before it went), in which the only hint of reproof was a gentle remonstrance that her son had not written to herself, to ask a fond mother's blessing for that step which he was about taking. 'Castlewood knew very well,' so she wrote to her son, 'that she never denied him anything in her power to give, much less would she think of opposing a marriage that was to make his happiness, as she trusted, and keep him out of wild courses, which had alarmed her a good deal:' and she besought him to come quickly to England, to settle down in his family house of Castlewood ('It is his family house,' says she to Colonel Esmond, 'though only his own house by your forbearance') and to receive the accompt of her stewardship during his ten years' minority. By care and frugality, she had got the estate into a better condition than ever it had been since the Parliamentary wars; and my Lord was now master of a pretty, small income, not encumbered of debts, as it had been during his father's ruinous time. 'But in saving my son's fortune,' says she, 'I fear I have lost a great part of my hold on him.' And, indeed, this was the case: her Ladyship's daughter complaining that their mother did all for Frank, and nothing for her; and Frank himself being dissatisfied at the narrow, simple way of his mother's living at Walcote, where he had been brought up more like a poor parson's son than a young nobleman that was to make a figure in the world. 'Twas this mistake in his early training, very likely, that set him so eager upon pleasure when he had it in his power; nor is he the first lad that has been spoiled by the

over-careful fondness of women. No training is so useful for children, great or small, as the company of their betters in rank or natural parts; in whose society they lose the overweening sense of their own importance, which stay-at-home people very commonly learn.

But, as a prodigal that's sending in a schedule of his debts to his friends, never puts all down, and, you may be sure, the rogue keeps back some immense swingeing bill, that he doesn't dare to own; so the poor Frank had a very heavy piece of news to break to his mother, and which he hadn't the courage to introduce into his first confession. Some misgivings Esmond might have, upon receiving Frank's letter, and knowing into what hands the boy had fallen; but whatever these misgivings were, he kept them to himself, not caring to trouble his mistress with any fears that might be groundless.

However, the next mail which came from Bruxelles, after Frank had received his mother's letters there, brought back a joint composition from himself and his wife, who could spell no better than her young scapegrace of a husband, full of expressions of thanks, love, and duty to the Dowager Viscountess, as my poor lady now was styled; and along with this letter (which was read in a family council, namely, the Viscountess, Mistress Beatrix, and the writer of this Memoir, and which was pronounced to be vulgar by the Maid of Honour, and felt to be so by the other two) there came a private letter for Colonel Esmond from poor Frank, with another dismal commission for the Colonel to execute, at his best opportunity; and this was to announce that Frank had seen fit, 'by the exhortation of Mr. Holt, the influence of his Clotilda, and the blessing of Heaven and the saints,' says my Lord demurely, 'to change his religion, and be

received into the bosom of that Church of which his sovereign, many of his family, and the greater part of the civilised world, were members.' And his Lordship added a postcript, of which Esmond knew the inspiring genius very well, for it had the genuine twang of the Seminary, and was quite unlike poor Frank's ordinary style of writing and thinking; in which he reminded Colonel Esmond that he too was, by birth, of that Church; and that his mother and sister should have his Lordship's prayers to the saints (an inestimable benefit, truly !) for their conversion.

If Esmond had wanted to keep this secret, he could not; for a day or two after receiving this letter, a notice from Bruxelles appeared in the *Post-Boy* and other prints, announcing that 'a young Irish lord, the Viscount C-stlew—d, just come to his majority, and who had served the last campaigns with great credit, as aide-de-camp to his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, had declared for the Popish religion at Bruxelles, and had walked in a procession barefoot, with a wax-taper in his hand.' The notorious Mr. Holt, who had been employed as a Jacobite agent during the last reign, and many times pardoned by King William, had been, the *Post-Boy* said, the agent of this conversion.

The Lady Castlewood was as much cast down by this news as Miss Beatrix was indignant at it. 'So,' says she, 'Castlewood is no longer a home for us, mother. Frank's foreign wife will bring her confessor, and there will be frogs for dinner; and all Tusher's and my grandfather's sermons are flung away upon my brother. I used to tell you that you killed him with the Catechism, and that he would turn wicked as soon as he broke from his mammy's leading-strings. Oh, mother, you would not believe that the young scape-grace was playing you tricks, and that sneak of a Tusher was not a fit guide for him. Oh, those

parsons, I hate 'em all!' says Mistress Beatrix, clapping her hands together; 'yes, whether they wear cassocks and buckles, or beards and bare feet. There's a horrid Irish wretch who never misses a Sunday at Court, and who pays me compliments there, the horrible man; and if you want to know what parsons are, you should see his behaviour, and hear him talk of his own cloth. They're all the same, whether they're bishops, or bonzes, or Indian fakirs. They try to domineer, and they frighten us with kingdom come; and they wear a sanctified air in public, and expect us to go down on our knees and ask their blessing; and they intrigue, and they grasp, and they backbite, and they slander worse than the worst courtier or the wickedest old woman. I heard this Mr. Swift sneering at my Lord Duke of Marlborough's courage the other day. He! that Teague from Dublin! because his Grace is not in favour, dares to say this of him; and he says this that it may get to Her Majesty's ear, and to coax and wheedle Mrs. Masham. They say the Elector of Hanover has a dozen of mistresses in his Court at Herrenhausen, and if he comes to be king over us, I wager that the bishops and Mr. Swift, that wants to be one, will coax and wheedle them. Oh, those priests and their grave airs! I'm sick of their square toes and their rustling cassocks. I should like to go to a country where there was not one, or turn Quaker, and get rid of 'em; and I would, only the dress is not becoming, and I've much too pretty a figure to hide it. Haven't I, Cousin?' and here she glanced at her person and the looking-glass, which told her rightly that a more beautiful shape and face never were seen.

'I made that onslaught on the priests,' says Miss Beatrix, afterwards, 'in order to divert my poor dear mother's anguish about Frank. Frank is as vain as a

girl, Cousin. Talk of us girls being vain, what are *we* to you? It was easy to see that the first woman who chose would make a fool of him, or the first robe —I count a priest and a woman all the same. We are always caballing; we are not answerable for the fibs we tell; we are always cajoling and coaxing, or threatening; and we are always making mischief, Colonel Esmond—mark my word for that, who know the world, sir, and have to make my way in it. I see as well as possible how Frank's marriage hath been managed. The Count, our papa-in-law, is always away at the coffee-house. The Countess, our mother, is always in the kitchen looking after the dinner. The Countess, our sister, is at the spinet. When my Lord comes to say he is going on the campaign, the lovely Clotilda bursts into tears, and faints—so; he catches her in his arms—no, sir, keep your distance, Cousin, if you please,—she cries on his shoulder, and he says, "Oh, my divine, my adored, my beloved Clotilda, are you sorry to part with me?" "Oh, my Francisco," says she, "oh, my Lord!" and at this very instant mamma and a couple of young brothers, with moustaches and long rapiers, come in from the kitchen, where they have been eating bread and onions. Mark my word, you will have all this woman's relations at Castlewood three months after she has arrived there. The old count and countess, and the young counts, and all the little countesses her sisters. Counts! every one of these wretches says he is a count. Guiscard, that stabbed Mr. Harley, said he was a count; and I believe he was a barber. All Frenchmen are barbers—Fiddledee! don't contradict me—or else dancing-masters, or else priests.' And so she rattled on.

'Who was it taught *you* to dance, Cousin Beatrix?' says the Colonel.

She laughed out the air of a minuet, and swept a low curtsey, coming up to the recover with the prettiest little foot in the world pointed out. Her mother came in as she was in this attitude; my Lady had been in her closet, having taken poor Frank's conversion in a very serious way; the madcap girl ran up to her mother, put her arms round her waist, kissed her, tried to make her dance, and said, 'Don't be silly, you kind little mamma, and cry about Frank turning Papist. What a figure he must be, with a white sheet and a candle, walking in a procession barefoot!' And she kicked off her little slippers (the wonderfullest little shoes, with wonderful tall red heels: Esmond pounced upon one as it fell close beside him), and she put on the drollest little *moue*, and marched up and down the room holding Esmond's cane by way of taper. Serious as her mood was, Lady Castlewood could not refrain from laughing; and as for Esmond, he looked on with that delight with which the sight of this fair creature always inspired him: never had he seen any woman so arch, so brilliant, and so beautiful.

Having finished her march, she put out her foot for her slipper. The Colonel knelt down! 'If you will be Pope I will turn Papist,' says he; and her Holiness gave him gracious leave to kiss the little stockinged foot before he put the slipper on.

Mamma's feet began to pat on the floor during this operation, and Beatrix, whose bright eyes nothing escaped, saw that little mark of impatience. She ran up and embraced her mother, with her usual cry of, 'Oh, you silly little mamma: your feet are quite as pretty as mine,' says she: 'they are, Cousin, though she hides 'em; but the shoemaker will tell you that he makes for both off the same last.'

'You are taller than I am, dearest,' says her mother,

blushing over her whole sweet face—'and—and it is your hand, my dear, and not your foot he wants you to give him;' and she said it with a hysteric laugh, that had more of tears than laughter in it; laying her head on her daughter's fair shoulder, and hiding it there. They made a very pretty picture together, and looked like a pair of sisters—the sweet simple matron seeming younger than her years, and her daughter, if not older, yet somehow, from a commanding manner and grace which she possessed above most women, her mother's superior and protectress.

'But oh!' cries my mistress, recovering herself after this scene, and returning to her usual sad tone, ''tis a shame that we should laugh and be making merry on a day when we ought to be down on our knees and asking pardon.'

'Asking pardon for what?' says saucy Mrs. Beatrix—'because Frank takes it into his head to fast on Fridays and worship images? You know if you had been born a Papist, mother, a Papist you would have remained to the end of your days. 'Tis the religion of the King and of some of the best quality. For my part, I'm no enemy to it, and think Queen Bess was not a penny better than Queen Mary.'

'Hush, Beatrix! Do not jest with sacred things, and remember of what parentage you come,' cries my Lady. Beatrix was ordering her ribbons, and adjusting her tucker, and performing a dozen provokingly pretty ceremonies before the glass. The girl was no hypocrite at least. She never at that time could be brought to think but of the world and her beauty; and seemed to have no more sense of devotion than some people have of music, that cannot distinguish one air from another. Esmond saw this fault in her, as he saw many others—a bad wife would Beatrix Esmond make, he thought, for any man under the degree of a

prince. She was born to shine in great assemblies, and to adorn palaces, and to command everywhere—to conduct an intrigue of politics, or to glitter in a queen's train. But to sit at a homely table, and mend the stockings of a poor man's children! that was no fitting duty for her, or at least one that she wouldn't have broke her heart in trying to do. She was a princess, though she had scarce a shilling to her fortune; and one of her subjects—the most abject and devoted wretch, sure, that ever drivelled at a woman's knees—was this unlucky gentleman; who bound his good sense, and reason, and independence, hand and foot, and submitted them to her.

And who does not know how ruthlessly women will tyrannise when they are let to domineer? and who does not know how useless advice is? I could give good counsel to my descendants, but I know they'll follow their own way, for all their grandfather's sermon. A man gets his own experience about women, and will take nobody's hearsay; nor, indeed, is the young fellow worth a fig that would. 'Tis I that am in love with my mistress, not my old grandmother that counsels me: 'tis I that have fixed the value of the thing I would have, and know the price I would pay for it. It may be worthless to you, but 'tis all my life to me. Had Esmond possessed the Great Mogul's crown and all his diamonds, or all the Duke of Marlborough's money, or all the ingots sunk at Vigo, he would have given them all for this woman. A fool he was, if you will; but so is a sovereign a fool, that will give half a principality for a little crystal as big as a pigeon's egg, and called a diamond: so is a wealthy nobleman a fool, that will face danger or death, and spend half his life, and all his tranquillity, caballing for a blue riband; so is a Dutch merchant a fool, that hath been known to pay

ten thousand crowns for a tulip. There's some particular prize we all of us value, and that every man of spirit will venture his life for. With this, it may be to achieve a great reputation for learning; with that, to be a man of fashion, and the admiration of the town; with another, to consummate a great work of art or poetry, and go to immortality that way: and with another, for a certain time of his life, the sole object and aim is a woman.

Whilst Esmond was under the domination of this passion, he remembers many a talk he had with his intimates, who used to rally Our Knight of the Rueful Countenance at his devotion, whereof he made no disguise, to Beatrix; and it was with replies such as the above he met his friends' satire. 'Granted, I am a fool,' says he, 'and no better than you; but you are no better than I. You have your folly you labour for; give me the charity of mine. What flatteries do you, Mr. St. John, stoop to whisper in the ears of a queen's favourite? What nights of labour doth not the laziest man in the world endure, foregoing his bottle, and his boon companions, foregoing Lais, in whose lap he would like to be yawning, that he may prepare a speech full of lies, to cajole three hundred stupid country gentlemen in the House of Commons, and get the hiccupping cheers of the October Club! What days will you spend in your jolting chariot' (Mr. Esmond often rode to Windsor, and especially, of later days, with the Secretary). 'What hours will you pass on your gouty feet—and how humbly will you kneel down to present a despatch—you, the proudest man in the world, that has not knelt to God since you were a boy, and in that posture whisper, flatter, adore almost, a stupid woman, that's often boozy with too much meat and drink, when Mr. Secretary goes for his audience! If my pursuit is

vanity, sure yours is too.' And then the Secretary would fly out in such a rich flow of eloquence as this pen cannot pretend to recall; advocating his scheme of ambition, showing the great good he would do for his country when he was the undisputed chief of it; backing his opinion with a score of pat sentences from Greek and Roman authorities (of which kind of learning he made rather an ostentatious display), and scornfully vaunting the very arts and meannesses by which fools were to be made to follow him, opponents to be bribed or silenced, doubters converted, and enemies overawed.

'I am Diogenes,' says Esmond, laughing, 'that is taken up for a ride in Alexander's chariot. I have no desire to vanquish Darius or to tame Bucephalus. I do not want what you want, a great name or a high place: to have them would bring me no pleasure. But my moderation is taste, not virtue; and I know that what I do want is as vain as that which you long after. Do not grudge me my vanity, if I allow yours: or rather, let us laugh at both indifferently, and at ourselves, and at each other.'

'If your charmer holds out,' says St. John, 'at this rate she may keep you twenty years besieging her, and surrender by the time you are seventy, and she is old enough to be a grandmother. I do not say the pursuit of a particular woman is not as pleasant a pastime as any other kind of hunting,' he added; 'only, for my part, I find the game won't run long enough. They knock under too soon—that's the fault I find with 'em.'

'The game which you pursue is in the habit of being caught, and used to being pulled down,' says Mr. Esmond.

'But Dulcinea del Toboso is peerless, eh?' says the other. 'Well, honest Harry, go and attack

windmills — perhaps thou art not more mad than other people,' St. John added, with a sigh.

CHAPTER III

A PAPER OUT OF THE 'SPECTATOR'

Doth any young gentleman of my progeny, who may read his old grandfather's papers, chance to be presently suffering under the passion of Love? There is a humiliating cure, but one that is easy and almost specific for the malady—which is, to try an alibi. Esmond went away from his mistress and was cured a half-dozen times; he came back to her side, and instantly fell ill again of the fever. He vowed that he could leave her and think no more of her, and so he could pretty well, at least, succeed in quelling that rage and longing he had whenever he was with her; but as soon as he returned he was as bad as ever again. Truly a ludicrous and pitiable object, at least exhausting everybody's pity but his dearest mistress', Lady Castlewood's, in whose tender breast he reposed all his dreary confessions, and who never tired of hearing him and pleading for him.

Sometimes Esmond would think there was hope. Then again he would be plagued with despair, at some impertinence or coquetry of his mistress. For days they would be like brother and sister, or the dearest friends—she, simple, fond, and charming—he, happy beyond measure at her good behaviour. But this would all vanish on a sudden. Either he would be too pressing, and hint his love, when she would rebuff him instantly, and give his vanity a box on the ear; or he would be jealous, and with perfect good reason,

of some new admirer that had sprung up, or some rich young gentleman newly arrived in the town, that this incorrigible flirt would set her nets and baits to draw in. If Esmond remonstrated, the little rebel would say, 'Who are you? I shall go my own way, sirrah, and that way is towards a husband, and I don't want *you* on the way. I am for your betters, Colonel, for your betters: do you hear that? You might do if you had an estate and were younger: only eight years older than I, you say! pish, you are a hundred years older. You are an old old Graveairs, and I should make you miserable, that would be the only comfort I should have in marrying you. But you have not money enough to keep a cat decently after you have paid your man his wages, and your landlady her bill. Do you think I am going to live in a lodging, and turn the mutton at a string whilst your honour nurses the baby? Fiddlestick, and why did you not get this nonsense knocked out of your head when you were in the wars? You are come back more dismal and dreary than ever. You and mamma are fit for each other. You might be Darby and Joan, and play cribbage to the end of your lives.'

'At least you own to your worldliness, my poor Trix,' says her mother.

'Worldliness! Oh, my pretty lady! Do you think that I am a child in the nursery, and to be frightened by Bogey? Worldliness, to be sure; and pray, madam, where is the harm of wishing to be comfortable? When you are gone, you dearest old woman, or when I am tired of you and have run away from you, where shall I go? Shall I go and be head nurse to my Popish sister-in-law, take the children their physic, and whip 'em, and put 'em to bed when they are naughty? Shall I be Castlewood's upper servant, and perhaps marry Tom Tusher? *Merci!*

I have been long enough Frank's humble servant. Why am I not a man? I have ten times his brains, and had I worn the—well, don't let your Ladyship be frightened—had I worn a sword and periwig instead of this mantle and commode to which nature has condemned me—(though 'tis a pretty stuff, too—Cousin Esmond! you will go to the Exchange to-morrow, and get the exact counterpart of this ribbon, sir; do you hear?)—I would have made our name talked about. So would Graveairs here have made something out of our name if he had represented it. My Lord Graveairs would have done very well. Yes, you have a very pretty way, and would have made a very decent, grave speaker.' And here she began to imitate Esmond's way of carrying himself and speaking to his face, and so ludicrously that his mistress burst out a-laughing, and even he himself could see there was some likeness in the fantastical malicious caricature.

'Yes,' says she, 'I solemnly vow, own, and confess, that I want a good husband. Where's the harm of one? My face is my fortune. Who'll come?—buy, buy, buy! I cannot toil, neither can I spin, but I can play twenty-three games on the cards. I can dance the last dance, I can hunt the stag, and I think I could shoot flying. I can talk as wicked as any woman of my years, and know enough stories to amuse a sulky husband for at least one thousand and one nights. I have a pretty taste for dress, diamonds, gambling, and old China. I love sugar-plums, Malines lace (that you brought me, Cousin, is very pretty), the opera, and everything that is useless and costly. I have got a monkey and a little black boy—Pompey, sir, go and give a dish of chocolate to Colonel Graveairs—and a parrot and a spaniel, and I must have a husband. Cupid, you hear?'

'Iss, Missis!' says Pompey, a little grinning negro

Lord Peterborow gave her, with a bird of paradise in his turbant, and a collar with his mistress' name on it.

'Iss, Missis!' says Beatrix, imitating the child. 'And if husband not come, Pompey must go fetch one.'

And Pompey went away grinning with his chocolate tray as Miss Beatrix ran up to her mother and ended her sally of mischief in her common way, with a kiss—no wonder that upon paying such a penalty her fond judge pardoned her.

When Mr. Esmond came home, his health was still shattered; and he took a lodging near to his mistresses, at Kensington, glad enough to be served by them, and to see them day after day. He was enabled to see a little company—and of the sort he liked best. Mr. Steele and Mr. Addison both did him the honour to visit him; and drank many a glass of good claret at his lodging, whilst their entertainer, through his wound, was kept to diet-drink and gruel. These gentlemen were Whigs, and great admirers of my Lord Duke of Marlborough; and Esmond was entirely of the other party. But their different views of politics did not prevent the gentlemen from agreeing in private, nor from allowing, on one evening when Esmond's kind old patron, Lieutenant-General Webb, with a stick and a crutch, hobbled up to the Colonel's lodging (which was prettily situate at Knightsbridge, between London and Kensington, and looking over the Gardens), that the Lieutenant-General was a noble and gallant soldier—and even that he had been hardly used in the Wynendael affair. He took his revenge in talk, that must be confessed; and if Mr. Addison had had a mind to write a poem about Wynendael, he might have heard

from the commander's own lips the story a hundred times over.

Mr. Esmond, forced to be quiet, betook himself to literature for a relaxation, and composed his comedy, whereof the prompter's copy lieth in my walnut escritoire, sealed up and docketed, 'The Faithful Fool, a Comedy, as it was performed by Her Majesty's Servants.' 'Twas a very sentimental piece; and Mr. Steele, who had more of that kind of sentiment than Mr. Addison, admired it, whilst the other rather sneered at the performance; though he owned that, here and there, it contained some pretty strokes. He was bringing out his own play of 'Cato' at the time, the blaze of which quite extinguished Esmond's farthing candle; and his name was never put to the piece, which was printed as by a Person of Quality. Only nine copies were sold, though Mr. Dennis, the great critic, praised it, and said 'twas a work of great merit; and Colonel Esmond had the whole impression burned one day in a rage, by Jack Lockwood, his man.

All this comedy was full of bitter satiric strokes against a certain young lady. The plot of the piece was quite a new one. A young woman was represented with a great number of suitors, selecting a pert fribble of a peer, in place of the hero (but ill-acted, I think, by Mr. Wilks, the Faithful Fool), who persisted in admiring her. In the fifth act, Teraminta was made to discover the merits of Eugenio (the F. F.), and to feel a partiality for him too late; for he announced that he had bestowed his hand and estate upon Rosaria, a country lass, endowed with every virtue. But it must be owned that the audience yawned through the play; and that it perished on the third night, with only half-a-dozen persons to behold its agonies. Esmond and his two mistresses came to

the first night, and Miss Beatrix fell asleep; whilst her mother, who had not been to a play since King James the Second's time, thought the piece, though not brilliant, had a very pretty moral.

Mr. Esmond dabbled in letters, and wrote a deal of prose and verse at this time of leisure. When displeased with the conduct of Miss Beatrix, he would compose a satire, in which he relieved his mind. When smarting under the faithlessness of women, he dashed off a copy of verses, in which he held the whole sex up to scorn. One day, in one of these moods, he made a little joke, in which (swearing him to secrecy) he got his friend Dick Steele to help him; and, composing a paper, he had it printed exactly like Steele's paper, and by his printer, and laid on his mistress' breakfast-table the following—

SPECTATOR.

'No. 341. '*Tuesday, April* 1, 1712.

Mutato nomine de te Fabula narratur.—HORACE.
Thyself the moral of the Fable see.—CREECH.

'Jocasta is known as a woman of learning and fashion, and as one of the most amiable persons of this court and country. She is at home two mornings of the week, and all the wits and a few of the beauties of London flock to her assemblies. When she goes abroad to Tunbridge or the Bath, a retinue of adorers rides the journey with her; and besides the London beaux, she has a crowd of admirers at the Wells, the polite amongst the natives of Sussex and Somerset pressing round her tea-tables, and being anxious for a nod from her chair. Jocasta's acquaintance is thus very numerous. Indeed, 'tis one smart writer's work to keep her visiting-book—a strong footman is engaged to carry it; and it would require a much stronger head even

than Jocasta's own to remember the names of all her dear friends.

'Either at Epsom Wells or Tunbridge (for of this important matter Jocasta cannot be certain) it was her Ladyship's fortune to become acquainted with a young gentleman, whose conversation was so sprightly, and manners amiable, that she invited the agreeable young spark to visit her if he ever came to London, where her house in Spring Garden should be open to him. Charming as he was, and without any manner of doubt a pretty fellow, Jocasta hath such a regiment of the like continually marching round her standard, that 'tis no wonder her attention is distracted amongst them. And so, though this gentleman made a considerable impression upon her, and touched her heart for at least three-and-twenty minutes, it must be owned that she has forgotten his name. He is a dark man, and may be eight-and-twenty years old. His dress is sober, though of rich materials. He has a mole on his forehead over his left eye ; has a blue ribbon to his cane and sword, and wears his own hair.

'Jocasta was much flattered by beholding her admirer (for that everybody admires who sees her is a point which she never can for a moment doubt) in the next pew to her at St. James's Church last Sunday ; and the manner in which he appeared to go to sleep during the sermon—though from under his fringed eyelids it was evident he was casting glances of respectful rapture towards Jocasta—deeply moved and interested her. On coming out of church he found his way to her chair, and made her an elegant bow as she stepped into it. She saw him at Court afterwards, where he carried himself with a most distinguished air, though none of her acquaintances knew his name ; and the next night he was at the play, where her Ladyship was pleased to acknowledge him from the side-box.

'During the whole of the comedy she racked her brains so to remember his name that she did not hear a word of the piece : and having the happiness to meet him once more in the lobby of the playhouse, she went up to him

in a flutter, and bade him remember that she kept two nights in the week, and that she longed to see him at Spring Garden.

'He appeared on Tuesday, in a rich suit, showing a very fine taste both in the tailor and wearer; and though a knot of us were gathered round the charming Jocasta, fellows who pretended to know every face upon the town, not one could tell the gentleman's name in reply to Jocasta's eager inquiries, flung to the right and left of her as he advanced up the room with a bow that would become a duke.

'Jocasta acknowledged this salute with one of those smiles and curtseys of which that lady hath the secret. She curtseys with a languishing air, as if to say, "You are come at last. I have been pining for you:" and then she finishes her victim with a killing look, which declares: "O Philander! I have no eyes but for you." Camilla hath as good a curtsey perhaps, and Thalestris much such another look; but the glance and the curtsey together belong to Jocasta of all the English beauties alone.

'"Welcome to London, sir," says she. "One can see you are from the country by your looks." She would have said, "Epsom," or "Tunbridge," had she remembered rightly at which place she had met the stranger; but, alas! she had forgotten.

'The gentleman said, "He had been in town but three days; and one of his reasons for coming hither was to have the honour of paying his court to Jocasta."

'She said, "The waters had agreed with her but indifferently."

'"The waters were for the sick," the gentleman said: "the young and beautiful came but to make them sparkle. And as the clergyman read the service on Sunday," he added, "your Ladyship reminded me of the angel that visited the pool." A murmur of approbation saluted this sally. Manilio, who is a wit when he is not at cards, was in such a rage that he revoked when he heard it.

'Jocasta was an angel visiting the waters; but at which of the Bethesdas? She was puzzled more and more; and,

as her way always is, looked the more innocent and simple, the more artful her intentions were.

'"We were discoursing," says she, "about spelling of names and words when you came. Why should we say goold and write gold, and call china chayney, and Cavendish Candish, and Cholmondeley Chumley? If we call Pulteney Poltney, why shouldn't we call poultry pultry—and"——

'"Such an enchantress as your Ladyship," says he, "is mistress of all sort of spells." But this was Dr. Swift's pun, and we all knew it.

'"And—and how do you spell your name?" says she, coming to the point at length; for this sprightly conversation had lasted much longer than is here set down, and been carried on through at least three dishes of tea.

'"Oh, madam," says he, "*I spell my name with the y.*" And laying down his dish, my gentleman made another elegant bow, and was gone in a moment.

'"Jocasta hath had no sleep since this mortification, and the stranger's disappearance. If balked in anything she is sure to lose her health and temper; and we, her servants, suffer, as usual, during the angry fits of our Queen. Can you help us, Mr. Spectator, who know everything, to read this riddle for her, and set at rest all our minds? We find in her list, Mr. Berty, Mr. Smith, Mr. Pike, Mr. Tyler—who may be Mr. Bertie, Mr. Smyth, Mr. Pyke, Mr. Tiler, for what we know. She hath turned away the clerk of her visiting-book, a poor fellow with a great family of children. Read me this riddle, good Mr. Shortface, and oblige your admirer—

'ŒDIPUS.'

'THE TRUMPET COFFEE-HOUSE, WHITEHALL.

'MR. SPECTATOR,—I am a gentleman but little acquainted with the town, though I have had a university education, and passed some years serving my country abroad, where my name is better known than in the coffee-houses and St. James's.

'Two years since my uncle died, leaving me a pretty estate in the county of Kent: and being at Tunbridge Wells last summer, after my mourning was over, and on the look-out, if truth must be told, for some young lady who would share with me the solitude of my great Kentish house, and be kind to my tenantry (for whom a woman can do a great deal more good than the best-intentioned man can) I was greatly fascinated by a young lady of London, who was the toast of all the company at the Wells. Every one knows Saccharissa's beauty; and I think, Mr. Spectator, no one better than herself.

'My table-book informs me that I danced no less than seven-and-twenty sets with her at the Assembly. I treated her to the fiddles twice. I was admitted on several days to her lodging, and received by her with a great deal of distinction, and, for a time, was entirely her slave. It was only when I found, from common talk of the company at the Wells, and from narrowly watching one, who I once thought of asking the most sacred question a man can put to a woman, that I became aware how unfit she was to be a country gentleman's wife; and that this fair creature was but a heartless worldly jilt, playing with affections that she never meant to return, and, indeed, incapable of returning them. 'Tis admiration such women want, not love that touches them; and I can conceive, in her old age, no more wretched creature than this lady will be, when her beauty hath deserted her, when her admirers have left her, and she hath neither friendship nor religion to console her.

'Business calling me to London, I went to St. James's Church last Sunday, and there opposite me sat my beauty of the Wells. Her behaviour during the whole service was so pert, languishing, and absurd; she flirted her fan, and ogled and eyed me in a manner so indecent, that I was obliged to shut my eyes, so as actually not to see her, and whenever I opened them beheld hers (and very bright they are) still staring at me. I fell in with her afterwards at Court, and at the playhouse: and here nothing would satisfy her but she must elbow through the crowd and

speak to me, and invite me to the assembly, which she holds at her house, not very far from Ch-r-ng Cr-ss.

'Having made her a promise to attend, of course I kept my promise; and found the young widow in the midst of a half-dozen of card-tables, and a crowd of wits and admirers. I made the best bow I could, and advanced towards her; and saw by a peculiar puzzled look in her face, though she tried to hide her perplexity, that she had forgotten even my name.

'Her talk, artful as it was, convinced me that I had guessed aright. She turned the conversation most ridiculously upon the spelling of names and words; and I replied with as ridiculous fulsome compliments as I could pay her: indeed, one in which I compared her to an angel visiting the sick wells, went a little too far; nor should I have employed it, but that the allusion came from the Second Lesson last Sunday, which we both had heard, and I was pressed to answer her.

'Then she came to the question, which I knew was awaiting me, and asked how I *spelt* my name? "Madam," says I, turning on my heel, "I spell it with a *y*." And so I left her, wondering at the light-heartedness of the town-people, who forget and make friends so easily, and resolved to look elsewhere for a partner for your constant reader.

'CYMON WYLDOATS.

'You know my real name, Mr. Spectator, in which there is no such a letter as *hupsilon*. But if the lady, whom I have called Saccharissa, wonders that I appear no more at the tea-tables, she is hereby respectfully informed the reason *y*.'

The above is a parable, whereof the writer will now expound the meaning. Jocasta was no other than Miss Esmond, Maid of Honour to Her Majesty. She had told Mr. Esmond this little story of having met a gentleman somewhere, and forgetting his name, when the gentleman, with no such malicious in-

tentions as those of 'Cymon' in the above fable, made the answer simply as above; and we all laughed to think how little Mistress Jocasta Beatrix had profited by her artifice and precautions.

As for Cymon, he was intended to represent yours and her very humble servant, the writer of the apologue and of this story, which we had printed on a *Spectator* paper at Mr. Steele's office, exactly as those famous journals were printed, and which was laid on the table at breakfast in place of the real newspaper. Mistress Jocasta, who had plenty of wit, could not live without her *Spectator* to her tea; and this sham *Spectator* was intended to convey to the young woman that she herself was a flirt, and that Cymon was a gentleman of honour and resolution, seeing all her faults, and determined to break the chains once and for ever.

For though enough hath been said about this love-business already—enough, at least, to prove to the writer's heirs what a silly fond fool their old grandfather was, who would like them to consider him as a very wise old gentleman; yet not near all has been told concerning this matter, which, if it were allowed to take in Esmond's journal the space it occupied in his time, would weary his kinsmen and women of a hundred years' time beyond all endurance; and form such a diary of folly and drivelling, raptures and rage, as no man of ordinary vanity would like to leave behind him.

The truth is, that, whether she laughed at him or encouraged him; whether she smiled or was cold, and turned her smiles on another; worldly and ambitious as he knew her to be; hard and careless, as she seemed to grow with her Court life, and a hundred admirers that came to her and left her; Esmond, do what he would, could never get Beatrix out of his mind;

thought of her constantly at home or away. If he read his name in a *Gazette*, or escaped the shot of a cannon-ball or a greater danger in the campaign, as has happened to him more than once, the instant thought after the honour achieved or the danger avoided, was, 'What will *she* say of it?' 'Will this distinction or the idea of this peril elate her or touch her, so as to be better inclined towards me?' He could no more help this passionate fidelity of temper than he could help the eyes he saw with—one or the other seemed a part of his nature; and knowing every one of her faults as well as the keenest of her detractors, and the folly of an attachment to such a woman, of which the fruition could never bring him happiness for above a week, there was yet a charm about this Circe from which the poor deluded gentleman could not free himself: and for a much longer period than Ulysses (another middle-aged officer, who had travelled much, and been in the foreign wars), Esmond felt himself enthralled and besotted by the wiles of this enchantress. Quit her! He could no more quit her, as the Cymon of this story was made to quit his false one, than he could lose his consciousness of yesterday. She had but to raise her finger, and he would come back from ever so far; she had but to say I have discarded such and such an adorer, and the poor infatuated wretch would be sure to come and *rôder* about her mother's house, willing to be put on the ranks of suitors, though he knew he might be cast off the next week. If he were like Ulysses in his folly, at least she was in so far like Penelope that she had a crowd of suitors, and undid day after day and night after night the handiwork of fascination and the web of coquetry with which she was wont to allure and entertain them.

Part of her coquetry may have come from her

position about the Court, where the beautiful Maid of Honour was the light about which a thousand beaux came and fluttered; where she was sure to have a ring of admirers round her, crowding to listen to her repartees as much as to admire her beauty; and where she spoke and listened to much free talk, such as one never would have thought the lips or ears of Rachel Castlewood's daughter would have uttered or heard. When in waiting at Windsor or Hampton, the Court ladies and gentlemen would be making riding parties together; Mrs. Beatrix in a horseman's coat and hat, the foremost after the staghounds and over the park fences, a crowd of young fellows at her heels. If the English country ladies at this time were the most pure and modest of any ladies in the world—the English town and Court ladies permitted themselves words and behaviour that were neither modest nor pure; and claimed, some of them, a freedom which those who love that sex most would never wish to grant them. The gentlemen of my family that follow after me (for I don't encourage the ladies to pursue any such studies) may read in the works of Mr. Congreve, and Dr. Swift and others, what was the conversation and what the habits of our time.

The most beautiful woman in England in 1712, when Esmond returned to this country, a lady of high birth, and though of no fortune to be sure, with a thousand fascinations of wit and manners, Beatrix Esmond was now six-and-twenty years old, and Beatrix Esmond still. Of her hundred adorers she had not chosen one for a husband; and those who had asked had been jilted by her; and more still had left her. A succession of near ten years' crops of beauties had come up since her time, and had been reaped by proper *husband*men, if we may make an agricultural simile, and had been housed comfortably long ago.

Her own contemporaries were sober mothers by this time; girls with not a tithe of her charms, or her wit, having made good matches, and now claiming precedence over the spinster who but lately had derided and outshone them. The young beauties were beginning to look down on Beatrix as an old maid, and sneer, and call her one of Charles the Second's ladies, and ask whether her portrait was not in the Hampton Court Gallery? But still she reigned, at least in one man's opinion, superior over all the little misses that were the toasts of the young lads; and in Esmond's eyes was ever perfectly lovely and young.

Who knows how many were nearly made happy by possessing her, or, rather, how many were fortunate in escaping this siren? 'Tis a marvel to think that her mother was the purest and simplest woman in the whole world, and that this girl should have been born from her. I am inclined to fancy, my mistress, who never said a harsh word to her children (and but twice or thrice only to one person), must have been too fond and pressing with the maternal authority: for her son and her daughter both revolted early; nor after their first flight from the nest could they ever be brought back quite to the fond mother's bosom. Lady Castlewood, and perhaps it was as well, knew little of her daughter's life and real thoughts. How was she to apprehend what passes in Queens' antechambers and at Court tables? Mrs. Beatrix asserted her own authority so resolutely that her mother quickly gave in. The Maid of Honour had her own equipage; went from home and came back at her own will: her mother was alike powerless to resist her or to lead her, or to command or to persuade her.

She had been engaged once, twice, thrice, to be married, Esmond believed. When he quitted home,

it hath been said, she was promised to my Lord Ashburnham, and now, on his return, behold his Lordship was just married to Lady Mary Butler, the Duke of Ormond's daughter, and his fine houses, and twelve thousand a year of fortune, for which Miss Beatrix had rather coveted him, was out of her power. To her Esmond could say nothing in regard to the breaking of this match; and, asking his mistress about it, all Lady Castlewood answered was: 'Do not speak to me about it, Harry. I cannot tell you how or why they parted, and I fear to inquire. I have told you before, that with all her kindness, and wit, and generosity, and that sort of splendour of nature she has, I can say but little good of poor Beatrix, and look with dread at the marriage she will form. Her mind is fixed on ambition only, and making a great figure: and, this achieved, she will tire of it as she does of everything. Heaven help her husband, whoever he shall be! My Lord Ashburnham was a most excellent young man, gentle and yet manly, of very good parts, so they told me, and as my little conversation would enable me to judge: and a kind temper—kind and enduring I'm sure he must have been, from all that he had to endure. But he quitted her at last, from some crowning piece of caprice or tyranny of hers; and now he has married a young woman that will make him a thousand times happier than my poor girl ever could.'

The rupture, whatever its cause was (I heard the scandal, but indeed shall not take pains to repeat at length in this diary the trumpery coffee-house story), caused a good deal of low talk; and Mr. Esmond was present at my Lord's appearance at the Birthday with his bride, over whom the revenge that Beatrix took was to look so imperial and lovely that the modest downcast young lady could not appear beside

her, and Lord Ashburnham, who had his reasons for wishing to avoid her, slunk away quite shamefaced, and very early. This time his Grace the Duke of Hamilton, whom Esmond had seen about her before, was constant at Miss Beatrix's side : he was one of the most splendid gentlemen of Europe, accomplished by books, by travel, by long command of the best company, distinguished as a statesman, having been ambassador in King William's time, and a noble speaker in the Scots' Parliament, where he had led the party that was against the Union, and though now five or six-and-forty years of age, a gentleman so high in stature, accomplished in wit, and favoured in person, that he might pretend to the hand of any Princess in Europe.

'Should you like the Duke for a cousin ? ' says Mr. Secretary St. John, whispering to Colonel Esmond in French ; 'it appears that the widower consoles himself.'

But to return to our little *Spectator* paper and the conversation which grew out of it. Miss Beatrix at first was quite *bit* (as the phrase of that day was) and did not 'smoke' the authorship of the story ; indeed Esmond had tried to imitate as well as he could Mr. Steele's manner (as for the other author of the *Spectator*, his prose style I think is altogether inimitable) ; and Dick, who was the idlest and best-natured of men, would have let the piece pass into his journal and go to posterity as one of his own lucubrations, but that Esmond did not care to have a lady's name whom he loved sent forth to the world in a light so unfavourable. Beatrix pished and psha'd over the paper ; Colonel Esmond watching with no little interest her countenance as she read it.

'How stupid your friend Mr. Steele becomes ! ' cries Miss Beatrix. 'Epsom and Tunbridge ! Will

he never have done with Epsom and Tunbridge, and with beaux at church, and Jocastas and Lindamiras? Why does he not call women Nelly and Betty, as their godfathers and godmothers did for them in their baptism?'

'Beatrix, Beatrix!' says her mother, 'speak gravely of grave things.'

'Mamma thinks the Church Catechism came from heaven, I believe,' says Beatrix, with a laugh, 'and was brought down by a bishop from a mountain. Oh, how I used to break my heart over it! Besides, I had a Popish godmother, mamma; why did you give me one?'

'I gave you the Queen's name,' says her mother, blushing.

'And a very pretty name it is,' said somebody else.

Beatrix went on reading: 'Spell my name with a *y*—why, you wretch,' says she, turning round to Colonel Esmond, 'you have been telling my story to Mr. Steele—or stop—you have written the paper yourself to turn me into ridicule. For shame, sir!'

Poor Mr. Esmond felt rather frightened, and told a truth, which was nevertheless an entire falsehood. 'Upon my honour,' says he, 'I have not even read the *Spectator* of this morning.' Nor had he, for that was not the *Spectator*, but a sham newspaper put in its place.

She went on reading: her face rather flushed as she read. 'No,' she says, 'I think you couldn't have written it. I think it must have been Mr. Steele when he was drunk—and afraid of his horrid vulgar wife. Whenever I see an enormous compliment to a woman, and some outrageous panegyric about female virtue, I always feel sure that the Captain and his better half have fallen out over-night, and that he has been brought home tipsy, or has been found out in'——

'Beatrix!' cries the Lady Castlewood.

'Well, mamma! Do not cry out before you are hurt. I am not going to say anything wrong. I won't give you more annoyance than I can help, you pretty, kind mamma. Yes, and your little Trix is a naughty little Trix, and she leaves undone those things which she ought to have done, and does those things which she ought not to have done, and there's——well now—I won't go on. Yes, I will, unless you kiss me.' And with this the young lady lays aside her paper, and runs up to her mother and performs a variety of embraces with her Ladyship, saying as plain as eyes could speak to Mr. Esmond, 'There, sir: would not *you* like to play the very same pleasant game?'

'Indeed, madam, I would,' says he.

'Would what?' asked Miss Beatrix.

'What you meant when you looked at me in that provoking way,' answers Esmond.

'What a confessor!' cries Beatrix, with a laugh.

'What is it Henry would like, my dear?' asks her mother, the kind soul, who was always thinking what we would like, and how she could please us.

The girl runs up to her. 'Oh, you silly kind mamma,' she says, kissing her again, 'that's what Harry would like;' and she broke out into a great joyful laugh; and Lady Castlewood blushed as bashful as a maid of sixteen.

'Look at her, Harry,' whispers Beatrix, running up and speaking in her sweet low tones. 'Doesn't the blush become her? Isn't she pretty? She looks younger than I am, and I am sure she is a hundred million thousand times better.'

Esmond's kind mistress left the room, carrying her blushes away with her.

'If we girls at Court could grow such roses as that,'

continues Beatrix, with her laugh, 'what wouldn't we do to preserve 'em? We'd clip their stalks and put 'em in salt and water. But those flowers don't bloom at Hampton Court and Windsor, Henry.' She paused for a minute, and the smile fading away from her April face, gave place to a menacing shower of tears. 'Oh, how good she is, Harry!' Beatrix went on to say. 'Oh, what a saint she is! Her goodness frightens me. I'm not fit to live with her. I should be better I think if she were not so perfect. She has had a great sorrow in her life and a great secret; and repented of it. It could not have been my father's death. She talks freely about that; nor could she have loved him very much—though who knows what we women do love, and why?'

'What, and why, indeed!' says Mr. Esmond.

'No one knows,' Beatrix went on, without noticing this interruption except by a look, 'what my mother's life is. She hath been at early prayer this morning: she passes hours in her closet; if you were to follow her thither, you would find her at prayers now. She tends the poor of the place—the horrid dirty poor! She sits through the curate's sermons—oh, those dreary sermons! And you see, *on a beau dire;* but good as they are, people like her are not fit to commune with us of the world. There is always, as it were, a third person present, even when I and my mother are alone. She can't be frank with me quite; who is always thinking of the next world, and of her guardian angel, perhaps that's in company. Oh, Harry, I'm jealous of that guardian angel!' here broke out Mistress Beatrix. 'It's horrid, I know; but my mother's life is all for heaven, and mine—all for earth. We can never be friends quite; and then she cares more for Frank's little finger than she does for me—I know she does: and she loves you, sir, a

"The foremost"

great deal too much; and I hate you for it. I would have had her all to myself; but she wouldn't. In my childhood it was my father she loved—(oh, how could she? I remember him kind and handsome, but so stupid, and not being able to speak after drinking wine). And then it was Frank; and now, it is heaven and the clergyman. How I would have loved her! From a child I used to be in a rage that she loved anybody but me; but she loved you all better—all, I know she did. And now, she talks of the blessed consolation of religion. Dear soul! she thinks she is happier for believing, as she must, that we are all of us wicked and miserable sinners; and this world is only a *pied-à-terre* for the good, where they stay for a night, as we do, coming from Walcote, at that great, dreary, uncomfortable Hounslow Inn, in those horrid beds—oh, do you remember those horrid beds?—and the chariot comes and fetches them to heaven the next morning.'

'Hush, Beatrix!' says Mr. Esmond.

'Hush, indeed. You are a hypocrite, too, Henry, with your grave airs and your glum face. We are all hypocrties. Oh dear me! We are all alone, alone, alone,' says poor Beatrix, her fair breast heaving with a sigh.

'It was I that writ every line of that paper, my dear,' says Mr. Esmond. 'You are not so worldly as you think yourself, Beatrix, and better than we believe you. The good we have in us we doubt of; and the happiness that's to our hand we throw away. You bend your ambition on a great marriage and establishment—and why? You'll tire of them when you win them; and be no happier with a coronet on your coach'——

'Than riding pillion with Lubin to market,' says Beatrix. 'Thank you, Lubin.'

'I'm a dismal shepherd, to be sure,' answers Esmond, with a blush; 'and require a nymph that can tuck my bed-clothes up, and make me water-gruel. Well, Tom Lockwood can do that. He took me out of the fire upon his shoulders, and nursed me through my illness as love will scarce ever do. Only good wages, and a hope of my clothes, and the contents of my portmanteau. How long was it that Jacob served an apprenticeship for Rachel?'

'For mamma?' says Beatrix. 'It is mamma your honour wants, and that I should have the happiness of calling you papa?'

Esmond blushed again. 'I spoke of a Rachel that a shepherd courted five thousand years ago; when shepherds were longer lived than now. And my meaning was, that since I saw you first after our separation—a child you were then . . .'

'And I put on my best stockings to captivate you, I remember, sir. . . .'

'You have had my heart ever since then, such as it was; and such as you were, I cared for no other woman. What little reputation I have won, it was that you might be pleased with it: and indeed, it is not much; and I think a hundred fools in the army have got and deserved quite as much. Was there something in the air of that dismal old Castlewood that made us all gloomy, and dissatisfied, and lonely under its ruined old roof? We were all so, even when together and united, as it seemed, following our separate schemes, each as we sat round the table.'

'Dear, dreary old place!' cries Beatrix. 'Mamma hath never had the heart to go back thither since we left it, when—never mind how many years ago.' And she flung back her curls, and looked over her fair shoulder at the mirror superbly, as if she said, 'Time, I defy you.'

'Yes,' says Esmond, who had the art, as she owned, of divining many of her thoughts. 'You can afford to look in the glass still; and only be pleased by the truth it tells you. As for me, do you know what my scheme is? I think of asking Frank to give me the Virginian estate King Charles gave our grandfather.' (She gave a superb curtsey, as much as to say, 'Our grandfather, indeed! Thank you, Mr. Bastard.') 'Yes, I know you are thinking of my bar-sinister, and so am I. A man cannot get over it in this country; unless, indeed, he wears it across a king's arms, when 'tis a highly honourable coat; and I am thinking of retiring into the plantations, and building myself a wigwam in the woods, and perhaps, if I want company, suiting myself with a squaw. We will send your Ladyship furs over for the winter; and, when you are old, we'll provide you with tobacco. I am not quite clever enough or not rogue enough—I know not which—for the Old World. I may make a place for myself in the New, which is not so full; and found a family there. When you are a mother yourself, and a great lady, perhaps I shall send you over from the plantation some day a little barbarian that is half Esmond half Mohock, and you will be kind to him for his father's sake, who was, after all, your kinsman; and whom you loved a little.'

'What folly you are talking, Harry!' says Miss Beatrix, looking with her great eyes.

''Tis sober earnest,' says Esmond. And, indeed, the scheme had been dwelling a good deal in his mind for some time past, and especially since his return home, when he found how hopeless, and even degrading to himself, his passion was. 'No,' says he, then: 'I have tried half-a-dozen times now. I can bear being away from you well enough; but being with you is intolerable' (another low curtsey on Mistress

Beatrix's part), 'and I will go. I have enough to buy axes and guns for my men, and beads and blankets for the savages; and I'll go and live amongst them.'

'*Mon ami*,' she says, quite kindly, and taking Esmond's hand, with an air of great compassion, 'you can't think that in our position anything more than our present friendship is possible. You are our elder brother—as such we view you, pitying your misfortune, not rebuking you with it. Why, you are old enough and grave enough to be our father. I always thought you a hundred years old, Harry, with your solemn face and grave air. I feel as a sister to you, and can no more. Isn't that enough, sir?' And she put her face quite close to his—who knows with what intention?

'It's too much,' says Esmond, turning away. 'I can't bear this life, and shall leave it. I shall stay, I think, to see you married, and then freight a ship, and call it the "Beatrix," and bid you all'——

Here the servant, flinging the door open, announced his Grace the Duke of Hamilton, and Esmond started back with something like an imprecation on his lips, as the nobleman entered, looking splendid in his star and green riband. He gave Mr. Esmond just that gracious bow which he would have given to a lacquey who fetched him a chair or took his hat, and seated himself by Miss Beatrix, as the poor Colonel went out of the room with a hang-dog look.

Esmond's mistress was in the lower room as he passed downstairs. She often met him as he was coming away from Beatrix; and she beckoned him into the apartment.

'Has she told you, Harry?' Lady Castlewood said.

'She has been very frank—very,' says Esmond.

'But—but about what is going to happen?'

'What is going to happen?' says he, his heart beating.

'His Grace the Duke of Hamilton has proposed to her,' says my Lady. 'He made his offer yesterday. They will marry as soon as his mourning is over; and you have heard his Grace is appointed Ambassador to Paris; and the Ambassadress goes with him.'

CHAPTER IV

BEATRIX'S NEW SUITOR

THE gentleman whom Beatrix had selected was, to be sure, twenty years older than the Colonel, with whom she quarrelled for being too old; but this one was but a nameless adventurer, and the other the greatest Duke in Scotland, with pretensions even to a still higher title. My Lord Duke of Hamilton had, indeed, every merit belonging to a gentleman, and he had had the time to mature his accomplishments fully, being upwards of fifty years old when Madam Beatrix selected him for a bridegroom. Duke Hamilton, then Earl of Arran, had been educated at the famous Scottish university of Glasgow, and, coming to London, became a great favourite of Charles the Second, who made him a lord of his bedchamber, and afterwards appointed him ambassador to the French King, under whom the Earl served two campaigns as His Majesty's aide-de-camp; and he was absent on this service when King Charles died.

King James continued my Lord's promotion—made him Master of the Wardrobe and Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Horse; and his Lordship adhered firmly to King James, being of the small company

that never quitted that unfortunate monarch till his departure out of England; and then it was, in 1688 namely, that he made the friendship with Colonel Francis Esmond, that had always been, more or less, maintained in the two families.

The Earl professed a great admiration for King William always, but never could give him his allegiance; and was engaged in more than one of the plots in the late great King's reign which always ended in the plotters' discomfiture, and generally in their pardon, by the magnanimity of the King. Lord Arran was twice prisoner in the Tower during this reign, undauntedly saying, when offered his release, upon parole not to engage against King William, that he would not give his word, because 'he was sure he could not keep it;' but, nevertheless, he was both times discharged without any trial; and the King bore this noble enemy so little malice, that when his mother, the Duchess of Hamilton, of her own right, resigned her claim on her husband's death, the Earl was, by patent signed at Loo, 1690, created Duke of Hamilton, Marquis of Clydesdale, and Earl of Arran, with precedency from the original creation. His Grace took the oaths and his seat in the Scottish Parliament in 1700: was famous there for his patriotism and eloquence, especially in the debates about the Union Bill, which Duke Hamilton opposed with all his strength, though he would not go the length of the Scottish gentry, who were for resisting it by force of arms. 'Twas said he withdrew his opposition all of a sudden, and in consequence of letters from the King at St. Germains, who entreated him on his allegiance not to thwart the Queen his sister in this measure; and the Duke, being always bent upon effecting the King's return to his kingdom through a reconciliation between his Majesty and

Queen Anne, and quite averse to his landing with arms and French troops, held aloof, and kept out of Scotland during the time when the Chevalier de St. George's descent from Dunkirk was projected, passing his time in England in his great estate in Staffordshire.

When the Whigs went out of office in 1710, the Queen began to show his Grace the very greatest marks of her favour. He was created Duke of Brandon and Baron of Dutton in England; having the Thistle already originally bestowed on him by King James the Second, his Grace was now promoted to the honour of the Garter—a distinction so great and illustrious, that no subject hath ever borne them hitherto together. When this objection was made to Her Majesty, she was pleased to say, 'Such a subject as the Duke of Hamilton has a pre-eminent claim to every mark of distinction which a crowned head can confer. I will henceforth wear both orders myself.'

At the Chapter held at Windsor in October 1712, the Duke and other knights, including Lord-Treasurer, the new-created Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, were installed; and a few days afterwards his Grace was appointed Ambassador-Extraordinary to France, and his equipages, plate, and liveries commanded, of the most sumptuous kind, not only for his Excellency the Ambassador, but for her Excellency the Ambassadress, who was to accompany him. Her arms were already quartered on the coach panels, and her brother was to hasten over on the appointed day to give her away.

His Lordship was a widower, having married, in 1698, Elizabeth, daughter of Digby Lord Gerard, by which marriage great estates came into the Hamilton family; and out of these estates came, in part, that tragic quarrel which ended the Duke's career.

From the loss of a tooth to that of a mistress there's no pang that is not bearable. The apprehension is much more cruel than the certainty; and we make up our mind to the misfortune when 'tis irremediable, part with the tormentor, and mumble our crust on t'other side of the jaws. I think Colonel Esmond was relieved when a ducal coach and six came and whisked his charmer away out of his reach, and placed her in a higher sphere. As you have seen the nymph in the opera-machine go up to the clouds at the end of the piece where Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, and all the divine company of Olympians are seated, and quaver out her last song as a goddess: so when this portentous elevation was accomplished in the Esmond family, I am not sure that every one of us did not treat the divine Beatrix with special honours; at least the saucy little beauty carried her head with a toss of supreme authority, and assumed a touch-me-not air, which all her friends very good-humouredly bowed to.

An old army acquaintance of Colonel Esmond's, honest Tom Trett, who had sold his company, married a wife, and turned merchant in the city, was dreadfully gloomy for a long time, though living in a fine house on the river, and carrying on a great trade to all appearance. At length Esmond saw his friend's name in the *Gazette* as a bankrupt; and a week after this circumstance my bankrupt walks into Mr. Esmond's lodging with a face perfectly radiant with good-humour, and as jolly and careless as when they had sailed from Southampton ten years before for Vigo. 'This bankruptcy,' says Tom, 'has been hanging over my head these three years; the thought hath prevented my sleeping, and I have looked at poor Polly's head on t'other pillow, and then towards my razor on the table, and thought to put an end to myself, and so give my woes the slip. But now we

are bankrupts: Tom Trett pays as many shillings in the pound as he can; his wife has a little cottage at Fulham, and her fortune secured to herself. I am afraid neither of bailiff nor of creditor: and for the last six nights have slept easy.' So it was that when Fortune shook her wings and left him, honest Tom cuddled himself up in his ragged virtue, and fell asleep.

Esmond did not tell his friend how much his story applied to Esmond too; but he laughed at it, and used it; and having fairly struck his docket in this love transaction, determined to put a cheerful face on his bankruptcy. Perhaps Beatrix was a little offended at his gaiety. 'Is this the way, sir, that you receive the announcement of your misfortune?' says she, 'and do you come smiling before me as if you were glad to be rid of me?'

Esmond would not be put off from his good-humour, but told her the story of Tom Trett and his bankruptcy. 'I have been hankering after the grapes on the wall,' says he, 'and lost my temper because they were beyond my reach: was there any wonder? They're gone now, and another has them—a taller man than your humble servant has won them.' And the Colonel made his cousin a low bow.

'A taller man, Cousin Esmond!' says she. 'A man of spirit would have scaled the wall, sir, and seized them! A man of courage would have fought for 'em, not gaped for 'em.'

'A Duke has but to gape and they drop into his mouth,' says Esmond, with another low bow.

'Yes, sir,' says she, 'a Duke *is* a taller man than you. And why should I not be grateful to one such as his Grace, who gives me his heart and his great name? It is a great gift he honours me with; I know 'tis a bargain between us; and I accept it, and

will do my utmost to perform my part of it. 'Tis no question of sighing and philandering between a nobleman of his Grace's age and a girl who hath little of that softness in her nature. Why should I not own that I am ambitious, Harry Esmond; and if it be no sin in a man to covet honour, why should a woman too not desire it? Shall I be frank with you, Harry, and say that if you had not been down on your knees, and so humble, you might have fared better with me? A woman of my spirit, cousin, is to be won by gallantry, and not by sighs and rueful faces. All the time you are worshipping and singing hymns to me, I know very well I am no goddess, and grow weary of the incense. So would you have been weary of the goddess too—when she was called Mrs. Esmond, and got out of humour because she had not pin-money enough, and was forced to go about in an old gown. Eh! Cousin, a goddess in a mob-cap, that has to make her husband's gruel, ceases to be divine—I am sure of it. I should have been sulky and scolded; and of all the proud wretches in the world Mr. Esmond is the proudest, let me tell him that. You never fall into a passion; but you never forgive, I think. Had you been a great man, you might have been good-humoured; but being nobody, sir, you are too great a man for me; and I'm afraid of you, Cousin—there! and I won't worship you, and you'll never be happy except with a woman who will. Why, after I belonged to you, and after one of my tantrums, you would have put the pillow over my head some night, and smothered me, as the black man does the woman in the play that you are so fond of. What's the creature's name?—Desdemona. You would, you little black-dyed Othello!'

'I think I should, Beatrix,' says the Colonel.

'And I want no such ending. I intend to live to

be a hundred, and to go to ten thousand routs and balls, and to play cards every night of my life till the year eighteen hundred. And I like to be the first of my company, sir; and I like flattery and compliments, and you give me none; and I like to be made to laugh, sir, and who's to laugh at *your* dismal face, I should like to know? and I like a coach-and-six or a coach-and-eight; and I like diamonds, and a new gown every week; and people to say, "That's the Duchess. How well her Grace looks! Make way for Madame l'Ambassadrice d'Angleterre. Call her Excellency's people"—that's what I like. And as for you, you want a woman to bring your slippers and cap, and to sit at your feet, and cry, "O caro! O bravo!" whilst you read your Shakspeares and Miltons and stuff. Mamma would have been the wife for you, had you been a little older, though you look ten years older than she does—you do, you glum-faced, blue-bearded little old man! You might have sat, like Darby and Joan, and flattered each other; and billed and cooed like a pair of old pigeons on a perch. I want my wings, and to use them, sir.' And she spread out her beautiful arms, as if indeed she could fly off like the pretty 'Gawrie,' whom the man in the story was enamoured of.

'And what will your Peter Wilkins say to your flight?' says Esmond, who never admired this fair creature more than when she rebelled and laughed at him.

'A duchess knows her place,' says she with a laugh. 'Why, I have a son already made for me, and thirty years old (my Lord Arran), and four daughters. How they will scold, and what a rage they will be in, when I come to take the head of the table! But I give them only a month to be angry; at the end of that time they shall love me every one, and so shall

Lord Arran, and so shall all his Grace's Scots vassals and followers in the Highlands. I'm bent on it; and when I take a thing in my head, 'tis done. His Grace is the greatest gentleman in Europe, and I'll try and make him happy; and, when the King comes back, you may count on my protection, Cousin Esmond—for come back the King will and shall; and I'll bring him back from Versailles, if he comes under my hoop.'

'I hope the world will make you happy, Beatrix,' says Esmond, with a sigh. 'You'll be Beatrix till you are my Lady Duchess—will you not? I shall then make your Grace my very lowest bow.'

'None of these sighs and this satire, Cousin,' she says. 'I take his Grace's great bounty thankfully—yes, thankfully; and will wear his honours becomingly. I do not say he hath touched my heart; but he has my gratitude, obedience, admiration—I have told him that, and no more; and with that his noble heart is content. I have told him all—even the story of that poor creature that I was engaged to—and that I could not love; and I gladly gave his word back to him, and jumped for joy to get back my own. I am twenty-five years old.'

'Twenty-six, my dear,' says Esmond.

'Twenty-five, sir—I choose to be twenty-five; and in eight years no man hath ever touched my heart. Yes—you did once, for a little, Harry, when you came back after Lille, and engaging with that murderer Mohun, and saving Frank's life. I thought I could like you; and mamma begged me hard, on her knees, and I did—for a day. But the old chill came over me, Henry, and the old fear of you and your melancholy; and I was glad when you went away, and engaged with my Lord Ashburnham, that I might hear no more of you, that's the

truth. You are too good for me, somehow. I could not make you happy, and should break my heart in trying, and not being able to love you. But if you had asked me when we gave you the sword, you might have had me, sir, and we both should have been miserable by this time. I talked with that silly lord all night just to vex you and mamma, and I succeeded, didn't I? How frankly we can talk of these things! It seems a thousand years ago: and, though we are here sitting in the same room, there is a great wall between us. My dear, kind, faithful, gloomy old cousin! I can like now, and admire you too, sir, and say that you are brave, and very kind, and very true, and a fine gentleman for all—for all your little mishap at your birth,' says she, wagging her arch head.

'And now, sir,' says she with a curtsey, 'we must have no more talk except when mamma is by, or his Grace is with us; for he does not half like you, Cousin, and is jealous as the black man in your favourite play.'

Though the very kindness of the words stabbed Mr. Esmond with the keenest pang, he did not show his sense of the wound by any look of his (as Beatrix, indeed, afterwards owned to him), but said, with a perfect command of himself and an easy smile, 'The interview must not end yet, my dear, until I have had my last word. Stay, here comes your mother' (indeed she came in here with her sweet anxious face, and Esmond going up kissed her hand respectfully. 'My dear lady may hear, too, the last words, which are no secrets, and are only a parting benediction accompanying a present for your marriage from an old gentleman your guardian; for I feel as if I was the guardian of all the family, and an old fellow that is fit to be the grandfather of you all; and in this

character let me make my Lady Duchess her wedding present. They are the diamonds my father's widow left me. I had thought Beatrix might have had them a year ago ; but they are good enough for a Duchess, though not bright enough for the handsomest woman in the world.' And he took the case out of his pocket in which the jewels were, and presented them to his cousin.

She gave a cry of delight, for the stones were indeed very handsome, and of great value ; and the next minute the necklace was where Belinda's cross is in Mr. Pope's admirable poem, and glittering on the whitest and most perfectly-shaped neck in all England.

The girl's delight at receiving these trinkets was so great, that after rushing to the looking-glass and examining the effect they produced upon that fair neck which they surrounded, Beatrix was running back with her arms extended, and was perhaps for paying her cousin with a price, that he would have liked no doubt to receive from those beautiful rosy lips of hers, but at this moment the door opened, and his Grace the bridegroom elect was announced.

He looked very black upon Mr. Esmond, to whom he made a very low bow indeed, and kissed the hand of each lady in his most ceremonious manner. He had come in his chair from the palace hard by, and wore his two stars of the Garter and the Thistle.

'Look, my Lord Duke,' says Mistress Beatrix, advancing to him, and showing the diamonds on her breast.

'Diamonds,' says his Grace. 'Hm ! they seem pretty.'

'They are a present on my marriage,' says Beatrix.

'From Her Majesty?' asks the Duke. 'The Queen is very good.'

'From my cousin Henry—from our cousin Henry,' cried both the ladies in a breath.

'I have not the honour of knowing the gentleman. I thought that my Lord Castlewood had no brother: and that on your Ladyship's side there were no nephews.'

'From our cousin, Colonel Henry Esmond, my Lord,' says Beatrix, taking the Colonel's hand very bravely, 'who was left guardian to us by our father, and who has a hundred times shown his love and friendship for our family.'

'The Duchess of Hamilton receives no diamonds but from her husband, madam,' says the Duke; 'may I pray you to restore these to Mr. Esmond?'

'Beatrix Esmond may receive a present from our kinsman and benefactor, my Lord Duke,' says Lady Castlewood, with an air of great dignity. 'She is my daughter yet: and if her mother sanctions the gift—no one else hath the right to question it.'

'Kinsman and benefactor!' says the Duke. 'I know of no kinsman: and I do not choose that my wife should have for benefactor a'——

'My Lord!' says Colonel Esmond.

'I am not here to bandy words,' says his Grace; 'frankly I tell you that your visits to this house are too frequent, and that I choose no presents for the Duchess of Hamilton from gentlemen that bear a name they have no right to.'

'My Lord!' breaks out Lady Castlewood, 'Mr. Esmond hath the best right to that name of any man in the world: and 'tis as old and as honourable as your Grace's.'

My Lord Duke smiled, and looked as if Lady Castlewood was mad, that was so talking to him.

'If I called him benefactor,' said my mistress, 'it is because he has been so to us—yes, the noblest, the truest, the bravest, the dearest of benefactors. He would have saved my husband's life from Mohun's sword. He did save my boy's, and defended him from that villain. Are those no benefits?'

'I ask Colonel Esmond's pardon,' says his Grace, if possible more haughty than before. 'I would say not a word that should give him offence, and thank him for his kindness to your Ladyship's family. My Lord Mohun and I are connected, you know, by marriage —though neither by blood nor friendship; but I must repeat what I said, that my wife can receive no presents from Colonel Esmond.'

'My daughter may receive presents from the Head of our House; my daughter may thankfully take kindness from her father's, her mother's, her brother's dearest friend; and be grateful for one more benefit besides the thousand we owe him,' cries Lady Castlewood. 'What is a string of diamond stones compared to that affection he hath given us—our dearest preserver and benefactor? We owe him not only Frank's life, but our all—yes, our all,' says my mistress, with a heightened colour and a trembling voice. 'The title we bear is his, if he would claim it. 'Tis we who have no right to our name: not he that's too great for it. He sacrificed his name at my dying lord's bedside —sacrificed it to my orphan children; gave up rank and honour because he loved us so nobly. His father was Viscount of Castlewood and Marquis of Esmond before him; and he is his father's lawful son and true heir, and we are the recipients of his bounty, and he the chief of a house that's as old as your own. And if he is content to forego his name that my child may bear it, we love him and honour him and bless him under whatever name he bears'—and here the fond

"Permit me to ask your Lordship's pardon
for words that were uttered in ignorance"

and affectionate creature would have knelt to Esmond again, but that he prevented her; and Beatrix, running up to her with a pale face and a cry of alarm, embraced her and said, 'Mother, what is this?'

''Tis a family secret, my Lord Duke,' says Colonel Esmond: 'poor Beatrix knew nothing of it; nor did my Lady till a year ago. And I have as good a right to resign my title as your Grace's mother to abdicate hers to you.'

'I should have told everything to the Duke of Hamilton,' said my mistress, 'had his Grace applied to me for my daughter's hand, and not to Beatrix. I should have spoken with you this very day in private, my Lord, had not your words brought about this sudden explanation—and now 'tis fit Beatrix should hear it; and know, as I would have all the world know, what we owe to our kinsman and patron.'

And then, in her touching way, and having hold of her daughter's hand, and speaking to her rather than my Lord Duke, Lady Castlewood told the story which you know already—lauding up to the skies her kinsman's behaviour. On his side Mr. Esmond explained the reasons that seemed quite sufficiently cogent with him, why the succession in the family, as at present it stood, should not be disturbed; and he should remain as he was, Colonel Esmond.

'And Marquis of Esmond, my Lord,' says his Grace, with a low bow. 'Permit me to ask your Lordship's pardon for words that were uttered in ignorance; and to beg for the favour of your friendship. To be allied to you, sir, must be an honour under whatever name you are known' (so his Grace was pleased to say); 'and in return for the splendid present you make my wife, your kinswoman, I hope you will please to command any service that James Douglas can perform. I shall never be easy unti' I

repay you a part of my obligations at least; and ere very long, and with the mission Her Majesty hath given me,' says the Duke, 'that may perhaps be in my power. I shall esteem it as a favour, my Lord, if Colonel Esmond will give away the bride.'

'And if he will take the usual payment in advance, he is welcome,' says Beatrix, stepping up to him; and, as Esmond kissed her, she whispered, 'Oh, why didn't I know you before?'

My Lord Duke was as hot as a flame at this salute, but said never a word: Beatrix made him a proud curtsey, and the two ladies quitted the room together.

'When does your Excellency go for Paris?' asks Colonel Esmond.

'As soon after the ceremony as may be,' his Grace answered. ''Tis fixed for the first of December: it cannot be sooner. The equipage will not be ready till then. The Queen intends the embassy should be very grand—and I have law business to settle. That ill-omened Mohun has come, or is coming, to London again: we are in a lawsuit about my late Lord Gerard's property; and he hath sent to me to meet him.'

CHAPTER V

MOHUN APPEARS FOR THE LAST TIME

Besides my Lord Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, who for family reasons had kindly promised his protection and patronage to Colonel Esmond, he had other great friends in power now, both able and willing to assist him, and he might, with such allies, look forward to as fortunate advancement in civil life at home as he had got rapid promotion abroad. His Grace was magnanimous enough to offer to take Mr. Esmond as secretary on his Paris embassy, but no doubt he intended that proposal should be rejected; at any rate, Esmond could not bear the thoughts of attending his mistress farther than the church-door after her marriage, and so declined that offer which his generous rival made him.

Other gentlemen in power were liberal at least of compliments and promises to Colonel Esmond. Mr. Harley, now become my Lord Oxford and Mortimer, and installed Knight of the Garter on the same day as his Grace of Hamilton had received the same honour, sent to the Colonel to say that a seat in Parliament should be at his disposal presently, and Mr. St. John held out many flattering hopes of advancement to the Colonel when he should enter the House. Esmond's friends were all successful, and the most successful and triumphant of all was his dear old commander, General Webb, who was now appointed Lieutenant-General of the Land Forces, and received

with particular honour by the Ministry, by the Queen, and the people out of doors, who huzza'd the brave chief when they used to see him in his chariot going to the House or to the Drawing-room, or hobbling on foot to his coach from St. Stephen's upon his glorious old crutch and stick, and cheered him as loud as they had ever done Marlborough.

That great Duke was utterly disgraced ; and honest old Webb dated all his Grace's misfortunes from Wynendael, and vowed that Fate served the traitor right. Duchess Sarah had also gone to ruin ; she had been forced to give up her keys, and her places, and her pensions :—'Ah, ah !' says Webb, 'she would have locked up three millions of French crowns with her keys had I but been knocked on the head, but I stopped that convoy at Wynendael.' Our enemy Cardonnel was turned out of the House of Commons (along with Mr. Walpole) for malversation of public money. Cadogan lost his place of Lieutenant of the Tower. Marlborough's daughters resigned their posts of ladies of the bedchamber ; and so complete was the Duke's disgrace, that his son-in-law, Lord Bridgewater, was absolutely obliged to give up his lodgings at St. James's, and had his half-pension, as Master of the Horse, taken away. But I think the lowest depth of Marlborough's fall was when he humbly sent to ask General Webb when he might wait upon him ; he who had commanded the stout old General, who had injured him and sneered at him, who had kept him dangling in his ante-chamber, who could not even after his great service condescend to write him a letter in his own hand ! The nation was as eager for peace as ever it had been hot for war. The Prince of Savoy came amongst us, had his audience of the Queen, and got his famous Sword of Honour, and strove with all his force to form a Whig party

together, to bring over the young Prince of Hanover —to do anything which might prolong the war, and consummate the ruin of the old sovereign whom he hated so implacably. But the nation was tired of the struggle: so completely wearied of it that not even our defeat at Denain could rouse us into any anger, though such an action so lost two years before would have set all England in a fury. 'Twas easy to see that the great Marlborough was not with the army. Eugene was obliged to fall back in a rage, and forego the dazzling revenge of his life. 'Twas in vain the Duke's side asked, 'Would we suffer our arms to be insulted? Would we not send back the only champion who could repair our honour?' The nation had had its bellyful of fighting: nor could taunts or outcries goad up our Britons any more.

For a statesman that was always prating of liberty, and had the grandest philosophic maxims in his mouth, it must be owned that Mr. St. John sometimes rather acted like a Turkish than a Greek philosopher, and especially fell foul of one unfortunate set of men, the men of letters, with a tyranny a little extraordinary in a man who professed to respect their calling so much. The literary controversy at this time was very bitter, the Government side was the winning one, the popular one, and I think might have been the merciful one. 'Twas natural that the Opposition should be peevish and cry out: some men did so from their hearts, admiring the Duke of Marlborough's prodigious talents, and deploring the disgrace of the greatest general the world ever knew: 'twas the stomach that caused the other patriots to grumble, and such men cried out because they were poor, and paid to do so. Against these my Lord Bolingbroke never showed the slightest mercy, whipping a dozen into prison or into the pillory without the least commiseration.

From having been a man of arms Mr. Esmond had now come to be a man of letters, but on a safer side than that in which the above-cited poor fellows ventured their liberties and ears. There was no danger on ours, which was the winning side; besides, Mr. Esmond pleased himself by thinking that he writ like a gentleman if he did not always succeed as a wit.

Of the famous wits of that age, who have rendered Queen Anne's reign illustrious, and whose works will be in all Englishmen's hands in ages yet to come, Mr. Esmond saw many, but at public places chiefly; never having a great intimacy with any of them, except with honest Dick Steele, and Mr. Addison, who parted company with Esmond, however, when that gentleman became a declared Tory, and lived on close terms with the leading persons of that party. Addison kept himself to a few friends, and very rarely opened himself except in their company. A man more upright and conscientious than he it was not possible to find in public life, and one whose conversation was so various, easy, and delightful. Writing now in my mature years, I own that I think Addison's politics were the right, and were my time to come over again, I would be a Whig in England and not a Tory; but with people that take a side in politics, 'tis men rather than principles that commonly bind them. A kindness or a slight puts a man under one flag or the other, and he marches with it to the end of the campaign. Esmond's master in war was injured by Marlborough, and hated him: and the lieutenant fought the quarrels of his leader. Webb coming to London was used as a weapon by Marlborough's enemies (and true steel he was, that honest chief); nor was his aide-de-camp, Mr. Esmond, an unfaithful or unworthy partisan. 'Tis strange here, and on a foreign soil, and in a land that is independent in all but

the name (for that the North American colonies shall remain dependants on yonder little island for twenty years more, I never can think), to remember how the nation at home seemed to give itself up to the domination of one or other aristocratic party, and took a Hanoverian king, or a French one, according as either prevailed. And while the Tories, the October Club gentlemen, the High Church parsons that held by the Church of England, were for having a Papist King, for whom many of their Scottish and English leaders, firm Churchmen all, laid down their lives with admirable loyalty and devotion; they were governed by men who had notoriously no religion at all, but used it as they would use any opinion for the purpose of forwarding their own ambition. The Whigs, on the other hand, who professed attachment to religion and liberty too, were compelled to send to Holland or Hanover for a monarch around whom they could rally. A strange series of compromises is that English History: compromise of principle, compromise of party, compromise of worship! The lovers of English freedom and independence submitted their religious consciences to an Act of Parliament; could not consolidate their liberty without sending to Zell or the Hague for a king to live under; and could not find amongst the proudest people in the world a man speaking their own language, and understanding their laws, to govern them. The Tory and High Church patriots were ready to die in defence of a Papist family that had sold us to France; the great Whig nobles, the sturdy republican recusants who had cut off Charles Stuart's head for treason, were fain to accept a king whose title came to him through a royal grandmother, whose own royal grandmother's head had fallen under Queen Bess's hatchet. And our proud English nobles sent to a petty German

town for a monarch to come and reign in London; and our prelates kissed the ugly hands of his Dutch mistresses, and thought it no dishonour. In England you can but belong to one party or t'other, and you take the house you live in with all its encumbrances, its retainers, its antique discomforts, and ruins even; you patch up, but you never build up anew. Will we of the New World submit much longer, even nominally, to this ancient British superstition? There are signs of the times which make me think that ere long we shall care as little about King George here, and peers temporal and peers spiritual, as we do for King Canute or the Druids.

This chapter began about the wits, my grandson may say, and hath wandered very far from their company. The pleasantest of the wits I knew were the Doctors Garth and Arbuthnot, and Mr. Gay, the author of 'Trivia,' the most charming kind soul that ever laughed at a joke or cracked a bottle. Mr. Prior I saw, and he was the earthen pot swimming with the pots of brass down the stream, and always and justly frightened lest he should break in the voyage. I met him both at London and Paris, where he was performing piteous *congees* to the Duke of Shrewsbury, not having courage to support the dignity which his undeniable genius and talent had won him, and writing coaxing letters to Secretary St. John, and thinking about his plate and his place, and what on earth should become of him should his party go out. The famous Mr. Congreve I saw a dozen of times at Button's, a splendid wreck of a man, magnificently attired, and though gouty, and almost blind, bearing a brave face against fortune.

The great Mr. Pope (of whose prodigious genius I have no words to express my admiration) was quite a puny lad at this time, appearing seldom in public

places. There were hundreds of men, wits, and pretty fellows frequenting the theatres and coffee-houses of that day—whom 'nunc perscribere longum est.' Indeed I think the most brilliant of that sort I ever saw was not till fifteen years afterwards, when I paid my last visit in England, and met young Harry Fielding, son of the Fielding that served in Spain and afterwards in Flanders with us, and who for fun and humour seemed to top them all. As for the famous Doctor Swift, I can say of him, 'Vidi tantum.' He was in London all these years up to the death of the Queen: and in a hundred public places where I saw him, but no more; he never missed Court of a Sunday, where once or twice he was pointed out to your grandfather. He would have sought me out eagerly enough had I been a great man with a title to my name, or a star on my coat. At Court the Doctor had no eyes but for the very greatest. Lord Treasurer and St. John used to call him Jonathan, and they paid him with this cheap coin for the service they took of him. He writ their lampoons, fought their enemies, flogged and bullied in their service, and it must be owned with a consummate skill and fierceness. 'Tis said he hath lost his intellect now, and forgotten his wrongs and his rage against mankind. I have always thought of him and of Marlborough as the two greatest men of that age. I have read his books (who doth not know them?) here in our calm woods, and imagine a giant to myself as I think of him, a lonely fallen Prometheus, groaning as the vulture tears him. Prometheus I saw, but when first I ever had any words with him, the giant stepped out of a sedan chair in the Poultry, whither he had come with a tipsy Irish servant parading before him, who announced him, bawling out his Reverence's name, whilst his master below was

as yet haggling with the chairman. I disliked this Mr. Swift, and heard many a story about him, of his conduct to men, and his words to women. He could flatter the great as much as he could bully the weak; and Mr. Esmond, being younger and hotter in that day than now, was determined, should he ever meet this dragon, not to run way from his teeth and his fire.

Men have all sorts of motives which carry them onwards in life, and are driven into acts of desperation, or it may be of distinction, from a hundred different causes. There was one comrade of Esmond's, an honest little Irish lieutenant of Handyside's, who owed so much money to a camp sutler, that he began to make love to the man's daughter, intending to pay his debt that way; and at the battle of Malplaquet, flying away from the debt and lady too, he rushed so desperately on the French lines, that he got his company: and came a captain out of the action, and had to marry the sutler's daughter after all, who brought him his cancelled debt to her father as poor Roger's fortune. To run out of the reach of bill and marriage, he ran on the enemy's pikes; and as these did not kill him he was thrown back upon t'other horn of his dilemma. Our great Duke at the same battle was fighting, not the French, but the Tories in England; and risking his life and the army's, not for his country but for his pay and places; and for fear of his wife at home, that only being in life whom he dreaded. I have asked about men in my own company (new drafts of poor country boys were perpetually coming over to us during the wars, and brought from the ploughshare to the sword), and found that a half of them under the flags were driven thither on account of a woman: one fellow was jilted by his mistress and took the shilling in despair;

another jilted the girl, and fled from her and the parish to the tents where the law could not disturb him. Why go on particularising? What can the sons of Adam and Eve expect, but to continue in that course of love and trouble their father and mother set out on? Oh, my grandson! I am drawing nigh to the end of that period of my history, when I was acquainted with the great world of England and Europe; my years are past the Hebrew poet's limit, and I say unto thee, all my troubles and joys too, for that matter, have come from a woman: as thine will when thy destined course begins. 'Twas a woman that made a soldier of me, that set me intriguing afterwards; I believe I would have spun smocks for her had she so bidden me; what strength I had in my head I would have given her; hath not every man in his degree had his Omphale and Delilah? Mine befooled me on the banks of the Thames, and in dear Old England; thou mayest find thine own by Rappahannoc.

To please that woman then I tried to distinguish myself as a soldier, and afterwards as a wit and a politician; as to please another I would have put on a black cassock and a pair of bands, and had done so but that a superior fate intervened to defeat that project. And I say, I think the world is like Captain Esmond's company I spoke of anon; and could you see every man's career in life, you would find a woman clogging him; or clinging round his march and stopping him; or cheering him and goading him; or beckoning him out of her chariot, so that he goes up to her, and leaves the race to be run without him; or bringing him the apple, and saying 'Eat'; or fetching him the daggers and whispering 'Kill! yonder lies Duncan, and a crown, and an opportunity.'

Your grandfather fought with more effect as a politician than as a wit; and having private animosities and grievances of his own and his General's against the great Duke in command of the army, and more information on military matters than most writers, who had never seen beyond the fire of a tobacco-pipe at 'Wills's,' he was enabled to do good service for that cause which he embarked in, and for Mr. St. John and his party. But he disdained the abuse in which some of the Tory writers indulged; for instance, Doctor Swift, who actually chose to doubt the Duke of Marlborough's courage, and was pleased to hint that his Grace's military capacity was doubtful: nor were Esmond's performances worse for the effect they were intended to produce (though no doubt they could not injure the Duke of Marlborough nearly so much in the public eyes as the malignant attacks of Swift did, which were carefully directed so as to blacken and degrade him), because they were writ openly and fairly by Mr. Esmond, who made no disguise of them, who was now out of the army, and who never attacked the prodigious courage and talents, only the selfishness and rapacity, of the chief.

The Colonel then, having writ a paper for one of the Tory journals, called the *Post-Boy* (a letter upon Bouchain, that the town talked about for two whole days, when the appearance of an Italian singer supplied a fresh subject for conversation), and having business at the Exchange, where Mistress Beatrix wanted a pair of gloves or a fan very likely, Esmond went to correct his paper, and was sitting at the printer's, when the famous Doctor Swift came in, his Irish fellow with him that used to walk before his chair, and bawled out his master's name with great dignity.

Mr. Esmond was waiting for the printer too, whose wife had gone to the tavern to fetch him, and was meantime engaged in drawing a picture of a soldier on horseback for a dirty little pretty boy of the printer's wife, whom she had left behind her.

'I presume you are the editor of the *Post-Boy*, sir?' says the Doctor in a grating voice that had an Irish twang; and he looked at the Colonel from under his two bushy eyebrows with a pair of very clear blue eyes. His complexion was muddy, his figure rather fat, his chin double. He wore a shabby cassock, and a shabby hat over his black wig, and he pulled out a great gold watch, at which he looks very fierce.

'I am but a contributor, Doctor Swift,' says Esmond, with the little boy still on his knee. He was sitting with his back in the window, so that the Doctor could not see him.

'Who told you I was Doctor Swift?' says the Doctor, eyeing the other very haughtily.

'Your Reverence's valet bawled out your name,' says the Colonel. 'I should judge you brought him from Ireland?'

'And pray, sir, what right have you to judge whether my servant came from Ireland or no? I want to speak with your employer, Mr. Leach. I'll thank ye go fetch him.'

'Where's your papa, Tommy!' asks the Colonel of the child, a smutty little wretch in a frock.

Instead of answering, the child begins to cry; the Doctor's appearance had no doubt frightened the poor little imp.

'Send that squalling little brat about his business, and do what I bid ye, sir,' says the Doctor.

'I must finish the picture first for Tommy,' says the Colonel, laughing. 'Here, Tommy, will you have your Pandour with whiskers or without?'

'Whisters,' says Tommy, quite intent on the picture.

'Who the devil are ye, sir?' cries the Doctor; 'are ye a printer's man, or are ye not?' he pronounced it like *naught*.

'Your Reverence needn't raise the devil to ask who I am,' says Colonel Esmond. 'Did you ever hear of Doctor Faustus, little Tommy? or Friar Bacon who invented gunpowder, and set the Thames on fire?'

Mr. Swift turned quite red, almost purple. 'I did not intend any offence, sir,' says he.

'I dare say, sir, you offended without meaning,' says the other drily.

'Who are ye, sir? Do you know who I am, sir? You are one of the pack of Grub Street scribblers that my friend Mr. Secretary hath laid by the heels. How dare ye, sir, speak to me in this tone?' cries the Doctor, in a great fume.

'I beg your honour's humble pardon if I have offended your honour,' says Esmond, in a tone of great humility. 'Rather than be sent to the Comptor, or be put in the pillory, there's nothing I wouldn't do. But Mrs. Leach, the printer's lady, told me to mind Tommy whilst she went for her husband to the tavern, and I daren't leave the child lest he should fall into the fire; but if your Reverence will hold him'——

'I take the little beast!' says the Doctor, starting back. 'I am engaged to your betters, fellow. Tell Mr. Leach that when he makes an appointment with Doctor Swift he had best keep it, do you hear? And keep a respectful tongue in your head, sir, when you address a person like me.'

'I'm but a poor broken-down soldier,' says the Colonel, 'and I've seen better days, though I am

orced now to turn my hand to writing. We can't help our fate, sir.'

'You're the person that Mr. Leach hath spoken to me of, I presume. Have the goodness to speak civilly when you are spoken to—and tell Leach to call at my lodgings in Bury Street, and bring the papers with him to-night at ten o'clock. And the next time you see me, you'll know me, and be civil, Mr. Kemp.'

Poor Kemp, who had been a lieutenant at the beginning of the war, and fallen into misfortune, was the writer of the *Post-Boy*, and now took honest Mr. Leach's pay in place of Her Majesty's. Esmond had seen this gentleman, and a very ingenious, hard-working, honest fellow he was, toiling to give bread to a great family, and watching up many a long winter night to keep the wolf from his door. And Mr. St. John, who had liberty always on his tongue, had just sent a dozen of the Opposition writers into prison, and one actually into the pillory, for what he called libels, but libels not half so violent as those writ on our side. With regard to this very piece of tyranny, Esmond had remonstrated strongly with the Secretary, who laughed, and said the rascals were served quite right; and told Esmond a joke of Swift's regarding the matter. Nay, more, this Irishman, when St. John was about to pardon a poor wretch condemned to death for rape, absolutely prevented the Secretary from exercising this act of good-nature, and boasted that he had had the man hanged; and great as the Doctor's genius might be, and splendid his ability, Esmond for one would affect no love for him, and never desired to make his acquaintance. The Doctor was at Court every Sunday assiduously enough, a place the Colonel frequented but rarely, though he had a great inducement to go there in the person of a fair maid of honour of Her Majesty's; and the airs

and patronage Mr. Swift gave himself, forgetting gentlemen of his country whom he knew perfectly, his loud talk, at once insolent and servile, nay, perhaps his very intimacy with Lord Treasurer and the Secretary, who indulged all his freaks and called him Jonathan, you may be sure, were remarked by many a person of whom the proud priest himself took no note, during that time of his vanity and triumph.

'Twas but three days after the 15th of November, 1712 (Esmond minds him well of the date), that he went by invitation to dine with his General, the foot of whose table he used to take on these festive occasions, as he had done at many a board, hard and plentiful, during the campaign. This was a great feast, and of the latter sort; the honest old gentleman loved to treat his friends splendidly: his Grace of Ormond, before he joined his army as Generalissimo; my Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, one of Her Majesty's Secretaries of State; my Lord Orkney, that had served with us abroad, being of the party. His Grace of Hamilton, Master of the Ordnance, and in whose honour the feast had been given, upon his approaching departure as Ambassador to Paris, had sent an excuse to General Webb at two o'clock, but an hour before the dinner: nothing but the most immediate business, his Grace said, should have prevented him having the pleasure of drinking a parting glass to the health of General Webb. His absence disappointed Esmond's old chief, who suffered much from his wounds besides: and though the company was grand, it was rather gloomy. St. John came last, and brought a friend with him: 'I'm sure,' says my General, bowing very politely, 'my table hath always a place for Doctor Swift.'

Mr. Esmond went up to the Doctor with a bow and a smile:—'I gave Doctor Swift's message,' says

he, 'to the printer: I hope he brought your pamphlet to your lodgings in time.' Indeed poor Leach had come to his house very soon after the Doctor left it, being brought away rather tipsy from the tavern by his thrifty wife; and he talked of Cousin Swift in a maudlin way, though of course Mr. Esmond did not allude to this relationship. The Doctor scowled, blushed, and was much confused, and said scarce a word during the whole of dinner. A very little stone will sometimes knock down these Goliaths of wit; and this one was often discomfited when met by a man of any spirit; he took his place sulkily, put water in his wine that the others drank plentifully, and scarce said a word.

The talk was about the affairs of the day, or rather about persons than affairs: my Lady Marlborough's fury, her daughters in old clothes and mob-caps looking out from their windows and seeing the company pass to the Drawing-room; the gentleman-usher's horror when the Prince of Savoy was introduced to Her Majesty in a tie-wig, no man out of a full-bottomed periwig ever having kissed the Royal hand before; about the Mohawks and the damage they were doing, rushing through the town, killing and murdering. Some one said the ill-omened face of Mohun had been seen at the theatre the night before, and Macartney and Meredith with him. Meant to be a feast, the meeting, in spite of drink and talk, was as dismal as a funeral. Every topic started subsided into gloom. His Grace of Ormond went away because the conversation got upon Denain, where we had been defeated in the last campaign. Esmond's General was affected at the allusion to this action too, for his comrade of Wynendael, the Count of Nassau Woudenbourg, had been slain there. Mr. Swift, when Esmond pledged him, said he drank no

wine, and took his hat from the peg and went away, beckoning my Lord Bolingbroke to follow him ; but the other bade him take his chariot and save his coach-hire—he had to speak with Colonel Esmond ; and when the rest of the company withdrew to cards, these two remained behind in the dark.

Bolingbroke always spoke freely when he had drunk freely. His enemies could get any secret out of him in that condition ; women were even employed to ply him and take his words down. I have heard that my Lord Stair, three years after, when the Secretary fled to France and became the Pretender's Minister, got all the information he wanted by putting female spies over St. John in his cups. He spoke freely now :—'Jonathan knows nothing of this for certain, though he suspects it, and by George, Webb will take an Archbishopric, and Jonathan a—no,—damme—Jonathan will take an Archbishopric from James, I warrant me, gladly enough. Your Duke hath the string of the whole matter in his hand,' the Secretary went on. 'We have that which will force Marlborough to keep his distance, and he goes out of London in a fortnight. Prior hath his business ; he left me this morning, and mark me, Harry, should fate carry off our august, our beloved, our most gouty and plethoric Queen, and Defender of the Faith, la bonne cause triomphera. A la santé de la bonne cause ! Everything good comes from France. Wine comes from France ; give us another bumper to the bonne cause.' We drank it together.

'Will the bonne cause turn Protestant ?' asked Mr. Esmond.

'No, hang it,' says the other, 'he'll defend our Faith as in duty bound, but he'll stick by his own. The Hind and the Panther shall run in the same car, by Jove ! Righteousness and peace shall kiss each

other: and we'll have Father Massillon to walk down the aisle of St. Paul's cheek by jowl with Dr. Sacheverel. Give us more wine: here's a health to the bonne cause, kneeling—damme, let's drink it kneeling!' He was quite flushed and wild with wine as he was talking.

'And suppose,' says Esmond, who always had this gloomy apprehension, 'the bonne cause should give us up to the French, as his father and uncle did before him?'

'Give us up to the French!' starts up Bolingbroke: 'is there any English gentleman that fears that? You who have seen Blenheim and Ramillies, afraid of the French! Your ancestors and mine, and brave old Webb's yonder, have met them in a hundred fields, and our children will be ready to do the like. Who's he that wishes for more men from England? My cousin Westmoreland? Give us up to the French, psha!'

'His uncle did,' says Mr. Esmond.

'And what happened to his grandfather?' broke out St. John, filling out another bumper. 'Here's to the greatest monarch England ever saw; here's to the Englishman that made a kingdom of her. Our great King came from Huntingdon, not Hanover; our fathers didn't look for a Dutchman to rule us. Let him come and we'll keep him, and we'll show him Whitehall. If he's a traitor, let us have him here to deal with him; and then there are spirits here as great as any that have gone before. There are men here that can look at danger in the face and not be frightened at it. Traitor! treason! what names are these to scare you and me? Are all Oliver's men dead, or his glorious name forgotten in fifty years? Are there no men equal to him, think you, as good—ay, as good? God save the King! and, if the monarchy fails us, God save the British Republic!'

He filled another great bumper, and tossed it up and drained it wildly, just as the noise of rapid carriage wheels approaching was stopped at our door, and after a hurried knock and a moment's interval, Mr. Swift came into the hall, ran upstairs to the room we were dining in, and entered it with a perturbed face. St. John, excited with drink, was making some wild quotation out of 'Macbeth,' but Swift stopped him.

'Drink no more, my Lord, for God's sake!' says he. 'I come with the most dreadful news.'

'Is the Queen dead?' cries out Bolingbroke, seizing on a water-glass.

'No, Duke Hamilton is dead; he was murdered an hour ago by Mohun and Macartney; they had a quarrel this morning; they gave him not so much time as to write a letter. He went for a couple of his friends, and he is dead, and Mohun, too, the bloody villain, who was set on him. They fought in Hyde Park just before sunset; the Duke killed Mohun, and Macartney came up and stabbed him, and the dog is fled. I have your chariot below; send to every part of the country and apprehend that villain; come to the Duke's house and see if any life be left in him.'

'Oh, Beatrix, Beatrix,' thought Esmond, 'and here ends my poor girl's ambition!'

CHAPTER VI

POOR BEATRIX!

THERE had been no need to urge upon Esmond the necessity of a separation between him and Beatrix: Fate had done that completely; and I think from the very moment poor Beatrix had accepted the Duke's offer, she began to assume the majestic air of a Duchess, nay, Queen Elect, and to carry herself as one sacred and removed from us common people. Her mother and kinsman both fell into her ways, the latter scornfully perhaps, and uttering his usual gibes at her vanity and his own. There was a certain charm about this girl of which neither Colonel Esmond nor his fond mistress could forego the fascination; in spite of her faults and her pride and wilfulness, they were forced to love her; and, indeed, might be set down as the two chief flatterers of the brilliant creature's court.

Who, in the course of his life, hath not been so bewitched, and worshipped some idol or another? Years after this passion hath been dead and buried, along with a thousand other worldly cares and ambitions, he who felt it can recall it out of its grave, and admire, almost as fondly as he did in his youth, that lovely queenly creature. I invoke that beautiful spirit from the shades and love her still; or rather I should say such a past is always present to a man; such a passion once felt forms a part of his whole being,

and cannot be separated from it ; it becomes a portion of the man of to-day, just as any great faith or conviction, the discovery of poetry, the awakening of religion, ever afterwards influence him ; just as the wound I had at Blenheim, and of which I wear the scar, hath become part of my frame and influenced my whole body, nay, spirit subsequently, though 'twas got and healed forty years ago. Parting and forgetting ? What faithful heart can do these ? Our great thoughts, our great affections, the Truths of our life, never leave us. Surely, they cannot separate from our consciousness ; shall follow it whithersoever that shall go ; and are of their nature divine and immortal.

With the horrible news of this catastrophe, which was confirmed by the weeping domestics at the Duke's own door, Esmond rode homewards as quick as his lazy coach would carry him, devising all the time how he should break the intelligence to the person most concerned in it ; and if a satire upon human vanity could be needed, that poor soul afforded it in the altered company and occupations in which Esmond found her. For days before, her chariot had been rolling the street from mercer to toyshop—from goldsmith to lace-man ; her taste was perfect, or at least the fond bridegroom had thought so, and had given her entire authority over all tradesmen, and for all the plate, furniture, and equipages, with which his Grace the Ambassador wished to adorn his splendid mission. She must have her picture by Kneller, a duchess not being complete without a portrait, and a noble one he made, and actually sketched in, on a cushion, a coronet which she was about to wear. She vowed she would wear it at King James the Third's coronation, and never a princess in the land would have become ermine better. Esmond found the ante-chamber crowded with milliners and

toyshop women, obsequious goldsmiths with jewels, salvers, and tankards; and mercers' men with hangings, and velvets, and brocades. My Lady Duchess elect was giving audience to one famous silversmith from Exeter Change, who brought with him a great chased salver, of which he was pointing out the beauties as Colonel Esmond entered. 'Come,' says she, 'Cousin, and admire the taste of this pretty thing.' I think Mars and Venus were lying in the golden bower, that one gilt Cupid carried off the war-god's casque—another his sword—another his great buckler, upon which my Lord Duke Hamilton's arms with ours were to be engraved—and a fourth was kneeling down to the reclining goddess with the ducal coronet in her hands, God help us! The next time Mr. Esmond saw that piece of plate, the arms were changed: the ducal coronet had been replaced by a viscount's: it formed part of the fortune of the thrifty goldsmith's own daughter, when she married my Lord Viscount Squanderfield two years after.

'Isn't this a beautiful piece?' says Beatrix, examining it, and she pointed out the arch graces of the Cupids, and the fine carving of the languid prostrate Mars. Esmond sickened as he thought of the warrior dead in his chamber, his servants and children weeping around him; and of this smiling creature attiring herself, as it were, for that nuptial deathbed. ''Tis a pretty piece of vanity,' says he, looking gloomily at the beautiful creature: there were flambeaux in the room lighting up the brilliant mistress of it. She lifted up the great gold salver with her fair arms.

'Vanity!' says she haughtily. 'What is vanity in you, sir, is propriety in me. You ask a Jewish price for it, Mr. Graves; but have it I will, if only to spite Mr. Esmond.'

'Oh, Beatrix, lay it down!' says Mr. Esmond. 'Herodias! you know not what you carry in the charger.'

She dropped it with a clang; the eager goldsmith running to seize his fallen ware. The lady's face caught the fright from Esmond's pale countenance, and her eyes shone out like beacons of alarm:—'What is it, Henry?' says she, running to him, and seizing both his hands. 'What do you mean by your pale face and gloomy tones?'

'Come away, come away!' says Esmond, leading her: she clung frightened to him, and he supported her upon his heart, bidding the scared goldsmith leave them. The man went into the next apartment, staring with surprise, and hugging his precious charger.

'Oh, my Beatrix, my sister!' says Esmond, still holding in his arms the pallid and affrighted creature, 'you have the greatest courage of any woman in the world; prepare to show it now, for you have a dreadful trial to bear.'

She sprang away from the friend who would have protected her:—'Hath he left me?' says she. 'We had words this morning: he was very gloomy, and I angered him: but he dared not, he dared not!' As she spoke a burning blush flushed over her whole face and bosom. Esmond saw it reflected in the glass by which she stood, with clenched hands, pressing her swelling heart.

'He has left you,' says Esmond, wondering that rage rather than sorrow was in her looks.

'And he is alive,' cries Beatrix, 'and you bring me this commission! He has left me, and you haven't dared to avenge me! You, that pretend to be the champion of our house, have let me suffer this insult! Where is Castlewood? I will go to my brother.'

'The Duke is not alive, Beatrix,' said Esmond.

She looked at her cousin wildly, and fell back to the wall as though shot in the breast:—'And you come here, and—and—you killed him?'

'No; thank Heaven!' her kinsman said. 'The blood of that noble heart doth not stain my sword! In its last hour it was faithful to thee, Beatrix Esmond. Vain and cruel woman! kneel and thank the awful Heaven which awards life and death, and chastises pride, that the noble Hamilton died true to you; at least that 'twas not your quarrel, or your pride, or your wicked vanity, that drove him to his fate. He died by the bloody sword which already had drunk your own father's blood. O woman, O sister! to that sad field where two corpses are lying—for the murderer died too by the hand of the man he slew—can you bring no mourners but your revenge and your vanity? God help and pardon thee, Beatrix, as He brings this awful punishment to your hard and rebellious heart.'

Esmond had scarce done speaking when his mistress came in. The colloquy between him and Beatrix had lasted but a few minutes, during which time Esmond's servant had carried the disastrous news through the household. The army of Vanity Fair, waiting without, gathered up all their fripperies and fled aghast. Tender Lady Castlewood had been in talk above with Dean Atterbury, the pious creature's almoner and director; and the Dean had entered with her as a physician whose place was at a sick-bed. Beatrix's mother looked at Esmond and ran towards her daughter, with a pale face and open heart and hands, all kindness and pity. But Beatrix passed her by, nor would she have any of the medicaments of the spiritual physician. 'I am best in my own room and by myself,' she said. Her eyes were quite dry; nor did Esmond ever see them otherwise, save once, in

respect to that grief. She gave him a cold hand as she went out: 'Thank you, brother,' she said, in a low voice, and with a simplicity more touching than tears; 'all you have said is true and kind, and I will go away and ask pardon.' The three others remained behind, and talked over the dreadful story. It affected Doctor Atterbury more even than us, as it seemed. The death of Mohun, her husband's murderer, was more awful to my mistress than even the Duke's unhappy end. Esmond gave at length what particulars he knew of their quarrel, and the cause of it. The two noblemen had long been at war with respect to the Lord Gerard's property, whose two daughters my Lord Duke and Mohun had married. They had met by appointment that day at the lawyer's in Lincoln's Inn Fields; had words which, though they appeared very trifling to those who heard them, were not so to men exasperated by long and previous enmity. Mohun asked my Lord Duke where he could see his Grace's friends, and within an hour had sent two of his own to arrange this deadly duel. It was pursued with such fierceness, and sprang from so trifling a cause, that all men agreed at the time that there was a party, of which these three notorious brawlers were but agents, who desired to take Duke Hamilton's life away. They fought three on a side, as in that tragic meeting twelve years back, which hath been recounted already, and in which Mohun performed his second murder. They rushed in, and closed upon each other at once without any feints or crossing of swords even, and stabbed one at the other desperately, each receiving many wounds; and Mohun having his death-wound, and my Lord Duke lying by him, Macartney came up and stabbed his Grace as he lay on the ground, and gave him the blow of which he died. Colonel Macartney denied this, of which

the horror and indignation of the whole kingdom would nevertheless have him guilty, and fled the country, whither he never returned.

What was the real cause of the Duke Hamilton's death?—a paltry quarrel that might easily have been made up, and with a ruffian so low, base, profligate, and degraded with former crimes and repeated murders, that a man of such renown and princely rank as my Lord Duke might have disdained to sully his sword with the blood of such a villain. But his spirit was so high that those who wished his death knew that his courage was like his charity, and never turned any man away; and he died by the hands of Mohun, and the other two cut-throats that were set on him. The Queen's Ambassador to Paris died, the loyal and devoted servant of the House of Stuart, and a Royal Prince of Scotland himself, and carrying the confidence, the repentance of Queen Anne along with his own open devotion, and the goodwill of millions in the country more, to the Queen's exiled brother and sovereign.

That party to which Lord Mohun belonged had the benefit of his service, and now were well rid of such a ruffian. He, and Meredith, and Macartney, were the Duke of Marlborough's men; and the two colonels had been broke but the year before for drinking perdition to the Tories. His Grace was a Whig now and a Hanoverian, and as eager for war as Prince Eugene himself. I say not that he was privy to Duke Hamilton's death: I say that his party profited by it; and that three desperate and bloody instruments were found to effect that murder.

As Esmond and the Dean walked away from Kensington discoursing of this tragedy, and how fatal it was to the cause which they both had at heart, the street-criers were already out with their broadsides,

shouting through the town the full, true, and horrible account of the death of Lord Mohun and Duke Hamilton in a duel. A fellow had got to Kensington and was crying it in the square there at very early morning, when Mr. Esmond happened to pass by. He drove the man from under Beatrix's very window, whereof the casement had been set open. The sun was shining though 'twas November: he had seen the market-carts rolling into London, the guard relieved at the palace, the labourers trudging to their work in the gardens between Kensington and the City—the wandering merchants and hawkers filling the air with their cries. The world was going to its business again, although dukes lay dead and ladies mourned for them; and kings, very likely, lost their chances. So night and day pass away, and to-morrow comes, and our place knows us not. Esmond thought of the courier, now galloping on the North road to inform him, who was Earl of Arran yesterday, that he was Duke of Hamilton to-day, and of a thousand great schemes, hopes, ambitions, that were alive in the gallant heart, beating a few hours since, and now in a little dust quiescent.

CHAPTER VII

I VISIT CASTLEWOOD ONCE MORE

THUS, for a third time, Beatrix's ambitious hopes were circumvented, and she might well believe that a special malignant fate watched and pursued her, tearing her prize out of her hand just as she seemed to grasp it, and leaving her with only rage and grief for her portion. Whatever her feelings might have been of anger or of sorrow (and I fear me that the former emotion was that which most tore her heart), she would take no confidant, as people of softer natures would have done under such a calamity; her mother and her kinsman knew that she would disdain their pity, and that to offer it would be but to infuriate the cruel wound which fortune had inflicted. We knew that her pride was awfully humbled and punished by this sudden and terrible blow; she wanted no teaching of ours to point out the sad moral of her story. Her fond mother could give but her prayers, and her kinsman his faithful friendship and patience to the unhappy, stricken creature; and it was only by hints, and a word or two uttered months afterwards, that Beatrix showed she understood their silent commiseration, and on her part was secretly thankful for their forbearance. The people about the Court said there was that in her manner which frightened away scoffing and condolence: she was above their triumph and their pity, and acted her part in that dreadful tragedy greatly and courageously; so that those who liked her least were yet forced to admire her. We, who watched her

after her disaster, could not but respect the indomitable courage and majestic calm with which she bore it. 'I would rather see her tears than her pride,' her mother said, who was accustomed to bear her sorrows in a very different way, and to receive them as the stroke of God, with an awful submission and meekness. But Beatrix's nature was different to that tender parent's; she seemed to accept her grief, and to defy it; nor would she allow it (I believe not even in private and in her own chamber) to extort from her the confession of even a tear of humiliation or a cry of pain. Friends and children of our race, who come after me, in which way will you bear your trials? I know one that prays God will give you love rather than pride, and that the Eye all-seeing shall find you in the humble place. Not that we should judge proud spirits otherwise than charitably. 'Tis nature hath fashioned some for ambition and dominion, as it hath formed others for obedience and gentle submission. The leopard follows his nature as the lamb does, and acts after leopard law; she can neither help her beauty, nor her courage, nor her cruelty; nor a single spot on her shining coat; nor the conquering spirit which impels her; nor the shot which brings her down.

During that well-founded panic the Whigs had, lest the Queen should forsake their Hanoverian Prince, bound by oaths and treaties as she was to him, and recall her brother, who was allied to her by yet stronger ties of nature and duty,—the Prince of Savoy, and the boldest of that party of the Whigs, were for bringing the young Duke of Cambridge over, in spite of the Queen, and the outcry of her Tory servants, arguing that the Electoral Prince, a Peer and Prince of the Blood-Royal of this Realm too, and in the line of succession to the crown, had

a right to sit in the Parliament whereof he was a member, and to dwell in the country which he one day was to govern. Nothing but the strongest ill-will expressed by the Queen, and the people about her, and menaces of the Royal resentment, should this scheme be persisted in, prevented it from being carried into effect.

The boldest on our side were, in like manner, for having our Prince into the country. The undoubted inheritor of the right divine; the feelings of more than half the nation, of almost all the clergy, of the gentry of England and Scotland with him; entirely innocent of the crime for which his father suffered —brave, young, handsome, unfortunate — who in England would dare to molest the Prince should he come among us, and fling himself upon British generosity, hospitality, and honour? An invader with an army of Frenchmen behind him, Englishmen of spirit would resist to the death, and drive back to the shores whence he came; but a Prince, alone, armed with his right only, and relying on the loyalty of his people, was sure, many of his friends argued, of welcome, at least of safety, among us. The hand of his sister the Queen, of the people his subjects, never could be raised to do him a wrong. But the Queen was timid by nature, and the successive Ministers she had, had private causes for their irresolution. The bolder and honester men, who had at heart the illustrious young exile's cause, had no scheme of interest of their own to prevent them from seeing the right done, and, provided only he came as an Englishman, were ready to venture their all to welcome and defend him.

St. John and Harley both had kind words in plenty for the Prince's adherents, and gave him endless promises of future support; but hints and promises

were all they could be got to give; and some of his friends were for measures much bolder, more efficacious, and more open. With a party of these, some of whom are yet alive, and some whose names Mr. Esmond has no right to mention, he found himself engaged the year after that miserable death of Duke Hamilton, which deprived the Prince of his most courageous ally in this country. Dean Atterbury was one of the friends whom Esmond may mention, as the brave bishop is now beyond exile and persecution, and to him, and one or two more, the Colonel opened himself of a scheme of his own, that, backed by a little resolution on the Prince's part, could not fail of bringing about the accomplishment of their dearest wishes.

My young Lord Viscount Castlewood had not come to England to keep his majority, and had now been absent from the country for several years. The year when his sister was to be married and Duke Hamilton died, my Lord was kept at Bruxelles by his wife's lying-in. The gentle Clotilda could not bear her husband out of her sight; perhaps she mistrusted the young scapegrace should he ever get loose from her leading-strings; and she kept him by her side to nurse the baby and administer posset to the gossips. Many a laugh poor Beatrix had had about Frank's uxoriousness; his mother would have gone to Clotilda when her time was coming, but that the mother-in-law was already in possession, and the negotiations for poor Beatrix's marriage were begun. A few months after the horrid catastrophe in Hyde Park, my mistress and her daughter retired to Castlewood, where my Lord, it was expected, would soon join them. But, to say truth, their quiet household was little to his taste; he could be got to come to Walcote but once after his first campaign; and then the young

rogue spent more than half his time in London, not appearing at Court or in public under his own name and title, but frequenting plays, bagnios, and the very worst company, under the name of Captain Esmond (whereby his innocent kinsman got more than once into trouble); and so under various pretexts, and in pursuit of all sorts of pleasures, until he plunged into the lawful one of marriage, Frank Castlewood had remained away from his country and was unknown, save amongst the gentlemen of the army, with whom he had served abroad. The fond heart of his mother was pained by this long absence. 'Twas all that Henry Esmond could do to soothe her natural mortification, and find excuses for his kinsman's levity.

In the autumn of the year 1713, Lord Castlewood thought of returning home. His first child had been a daughter; Clotilda was in the way of gratifying his Lordship with a second, and the pious youth thought that, by bringing his wife to his ancestral home, by prayers to St. Philip of Castlewood, and what not, Heaven might be induced to bless him with a son this time, for whose coming the expectant mamma was very anxious.

The long-debated peace had been proclaimed this year at the end of March; and France was open to us. Just as Frank's poor mother had made all things ready for Lord Castlewood's reception, and was eagerly expecting her son, it was by Colonel Esmond's means that the kind lady was disappointed of her longing, and obliged to defer once more the darling hope of her heart.

Esmond took horses to Castlewood. He had not seen its ancient grey towers and well-remembered woods for nearly fourteen years, and since he rode thence with my Lord, to whom his mistress with her young children by her side waved an adieu. What

ages seemed to have passed since then, what years of action and passion, of care, love, hope, disaster! The children were grown up now, and had stories of their own. As for Esmond, he felt to be a hundred years old; his dear mistress only seemed unchanged; she looked and welcomed him quite as of old. There was the fountain in the court babbling its familiar music, the old hall and its furniture, the carved chair my late lord used, the very flagon he drank from. Esmond's mistress knew he would like to sleep in the little room he used to occupy; 'twas made ready for him, and wallflowers and sweet herbs set in the adjoining chamber, the chaplain's room.

In tears of not unmanly emotion, with prayers of submission to the awful Dispenser of death and life, of good and evil fortune, Mr. Esmond passed a part of that first night at Castlewood, lying awake for many hours as the clock kept tolling (in tones so well remembered), looking back, as all men will, that revisit their home of childhood, over the great gulf of time, and surveying himself on the distant bank yonder, a sad little melancholy boy with his lord still alive—his dear mistress, a girl yet, her children sporting around her. Years ago, a boy on that very bed, when she had blessed him and called him her knight, he had made a vow to be faithful and never desert her dear service. Had he kept that fond boyish promise? Yes, before Heaven; yes, praise be to God! His life had been hers; his blood, his fortune, his name, his whole heart ever since had been hers and her children's. All night long he was dreaming his boyhood over again, and waking fitfully; he half fancied he heard Father Holt calling to him from the next chamber, and that he was coming in and out from the mysterious window.

Esmond rose up before the dawn, passed into the

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[illegible]

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Ailesbury, Clarendon and Yarmouth, that had all been engaged in plots against the usurper; a letter from the Duke of Berwick too, and one from the King at St. Germains, offering to confer upon his trusty and well-beloved Francis Viscount Castlewood the titles of Earl and Marquis of Esmond, bestowed by patent roll, and in the fourth year of his reign, upon Thomas Viscount Castlewood and the heirs-male of his body, in default of which issue the ranks and dignities were to pass to Francis aforesaid.

This was the paper, whereof my Lord had spoken, which Holt showed him the very day he was arrested, and for an answer to which he would come back in a week's time. I put these papers hastily into the crypt whence I had taken them, being interrupted by a tapping of a light finger at the ring of the chamber-door: 'twas my kind mistress, with her face full of love and welcome. She, too, had passed the night wakefully no doubt: but neither asked the other how the hours had been spent. There are things we divine without speaking, and know though they happen out of our sight. This fond lady hath told me that she knew both days when I was wounded abroad. Who shall say how far sympathy reaches, and how truly love can prophesy? 'I looked into your room,' was all she said; 'the bed was vacant, the little old bed: I knew I should find you here.' And tender and blushing faintly, with a benediction in her eyes, the gentle creature kissed him.

They walked out, hand-in-hand, through the old court, and to the terrace-walk, where the grass was glistening with dew, and the birds in the green woods above were singing their delicious choruses under the blushing morning sky. How well all things were remembered! The ancient towers and gables of the Hall darkling against the east, the purple shadows on

the green slopes, the quaint devices and carvings of the dial, the forest-crowned heights, the fair yellow plain cheerful with crops and corn, the shining river rolling through it towards the pearly hills beyond; all these were before us, along with a thousand beautiful memories of our youth, beautiful and sad, but as real and vivid in our minds as that fair and always-remembered scene our eyes beheld once more. We forget nothing. The memory sleeps, but wakens again; I often think how it shall be when, after the last sleep of death, the *réveillée* shall arouse us for ever, and the past in one flash of self-consciousness rush back, like the soul revivified.

The house would not be up for some hours yet (it was July, and the dawn was only just awake), and here Esmond opened himself to his mistress of the business he had in hand, and what part Frank was to play in it. He knew he could confide anything to her, and that the fond soul would die rather than reveal it; and bidding her keep the secret from all, he laid it entirely before his mistress (always as staunch a little loyalist as any in the kingdom), and indeed was quite sure that any plan of his was secure of her applause and sympathy. Never was such a glorious scheme to her partial mind, never such a devoted knight to execute it. An hour or two may have passed whilst they were having their colloquy. Beatrix came out to them just as their talk was over; her tall beautiful form robed in sable (which she wore without ostentation ever since last year's catastrophe), sweeping over the green terrace, and casting its shadows before her across the grass.

She made us one of her grand curtseys smiling, and called us 'the young people.' She was older, paler, and more majestic than in the year before; her mother seemed the younger of the two. She never

"She made us one of her grand curtseys"

once spoke of her grief, Lady Castlewood told Esmond, or alluded, save by a quiet word or two, to the death of her hopes.

When Beatrix came back to Castlewood she took to visiting all the cottages and all the sick. She set up a school of children, and taught singing to some of them. We had a pair of beautiful old organs in Castlewood Church, on which she played admirably, so that the music there became to be known in the country for many miles round, and no doubt people came to see the fair organist as well as to hear her. Parson Tusher and his wife were established at the vicarage, but his wife had brought him no children wherewith Tom might meet his enemies at the gate.

Honest Tom took care not to have many such, his great shovel-hat was in his hand for everybody. He was profuse of bows and compliments. He behaved to Esmond as if the Colonel had been a Commander-in-Chief; he dined at the Hall that day, being Sunday, and would not partake of pudding except under extreme pressure. He deplored my Lord's perversion, but drank his Lordship's health very devoutly; and an hour before at church sent the Colonel to sleep, with a long, learned, and refreshing sermon.

Esmond's visit home was but for two days; the business he had in hand calling him away and out of the country. Ere he went, he saw Beatrix but once alone, and then she summoned him out of the long tapestry room, where he and his mistress were sitting, quite as in old times, into the adjoining chamber, that had been Viscountess Isabel's sleeping apartment, and where Esmond perfectly well remembered seeing the old lady sitting up in the bed, in her night-rail, that morning when the troop of guard came to fetch her. The most beautiful woman in England lay in that bed now, whereof the great damask hangings were scarce faded since Esmond saw them last.

Here stood Beatrix in her black robes, holding a box in her hand; 'twas that which Esmond had given her before her marriage, stamped with a coronet which the disappointed girl was never to wear; and containing his aunt's legacy of diamonds.

'You had best take these with you, Harry,' says she; 'I have no need of diamonds any more.' There was not the least token of emotion in her quiet low voice. She held out the black shagreen-case with her fair arm, that did not shake in the least. Esmond saw she wore a black velvet bracelet on it, with my Lord Duke's picture in enamel; he had given it her but three days before he fell.

Esmond said the stones were his no longer, and strove to turn off that proffered restoration with a laugh: 'Of what good,' says he, 'are they to me? The diamond loop to his hat did not set off Prince Eugene, and will not make my yellow face look any handsomer.'

'You will give them to your wife, Cousin,' says she. 'My cousin, your wife has a lovely complexion and shape.'

'Beatrix,' Esmond burst out, the old fire flaming out as it would at times, 'will you wear those trinkets at your marriage? You whispered once you did not know me: you know me better now: how I fought, what I have sighed for, for ten years, what foregone!'

'A price for your constancy, my Lord!' says she; 'such a preux chevalier wants to be paid. Oh fie, Cousin!'

'Again,' Esmond spoke out, 'if I do something you have at heart; something worthy of me and you; something that shall make me a name with which to endow you; will you take it? There was a chance for me once, you said; is it impossible to recall it? Never shake your head, but hear me; say you will hear me a year hence. If I come back to you and bring you fame, will that please you? If I do what you desire most—what he who is dead desired most—will that soften you?'

'What is it, Henry?' says she, her face lighting up; 'what mean you?'

'Ask no questions,' he said; 'wait, and give me but time; if I bring back that you long for, that I have a thousand times heard you pray for, will you have no reward for him who has done you that service? Put away those trinkets, keep them: it shall not be at my marriage, it shall not be at yours; but if man can do it, I swear a day shall come when

there shall be a feast in your house, and you shall be proud to wear them. I say no more now; put aside these words, and lock away yonder box until the day when I shall remind you of both. All I pray of you now is, to wait and to remember.'

'You are going out of the country?' says Beatrix, in some agitation.

'Yes, to-morrow,' says Esmond.

'To Lorraine, Cousin?' says Beatrix, laying her hand on his arm; 'twas the hand on which she wore the Duke's bracelet. 'Stay, Harry!' continued she, with a tone that had more despondency in it than she was accustomed to show. 'Hear a last word. I do love you. I do admire you—who would not, that has known such love as yours has been for us all? But I think I have no heart; at least, I have never seen the man that could touch it; and, had I found him, I would have followed him in rags had he been a private soldier, or to sea, like one of those buccaneers you used to read to us about when we were children. I would do anything for such a man, bear anything for him: but I never found one. You were ever too much of a slave to win my heart; even my Lord Duke could not command it. I had not been happy had I married him. I knew that three months after our engagement—and was too vain to break it. Oh, Harry! I cried once or twice, not for him, but with tears of rage because I could not be sorry for him. I was frightened to find I was glad of his death; and were I joined to you, I should have the same sense of servitude, the same longing to escape. We should both be unhappy, and you the most, who are as jealous as the Duke was himself. I tried to love him; I tried, indeed I did: affected gladness when he came: submitted to hear when he was by me, and tried the wife's part I thought I was

to play for the rest of my days. But half-an-hour of that complaisance wearied me, and what would a lifetime be? My thoughts were away when he was speaking; and I was thinking, Oh that this man would drop my hand, and rise up from before my feet! I knew his great and noble qualities, greater and nobler than mine a thousand times, as yours are, Cousin, I tell you, a million and a million times better. But 'twas not for these I took him. I took him to have a great place in the world, and I lost it. I lost it, and do not deplore him—and I often thought, as I listened to his fond vows and ardent words, Oh, if I yield to this man and meet *the other*, I shall hate him and leave him! I am not good, Harry: my mother is gentle and good like an angel. I wonder how she should have had such a child. She is weak, but she would die rather than do a wrong; I am stronger than she, but I would do it out of defiance. I do not care for what the parsons tell me with their droning sermons: I used to see them at Court as mean and as worthless as the meanest woman there. Oh, I am sick and weary of the world! I wait but for one thing, and when 'tis done I will take Frank's religion and your poor mother's and go into a nunnery, and end like her. Shall I wear the diamonds then?—they say the nuns wear their best trinkets the day they take the veil. I will put them away as you bid me. Farewell, Cousin: mamma is pacing the next room, racking her little head to know what we have been saying. She is jealous: all women are. I sometimes think that is the only womanly quality I have.'

'Farewell. Farewell, brother.' She gave him her cheek as a brotherly privilege. The cheek was as cold as marble.

Esmond's mistress showed no signs of jealousy

when he returned to the room where she was. She had schooled herself so as to look quite inscrutably, when she had a mind. Amongst her other feminine qualities she had that of being a perfect dissembler.

He rid away from Castlewood to attempt the task he was bound on, and stand or fall by it; in truth his state of mind was such, that he was eager for some outward excitement to counteract that gnawing malady which he was inwardly enduring.

CHAPTER VIII

I TRAVEL TO FRANCE, AND BRING HOME A PORTRAIT OF RIGAUD

Mr. Esmond did not think fit to take leave at Court, or to inform all the world of Pall Mall and the coffee-houses, that he was about to quit England; and chose to depart in the most private manner possible. He procured a pass as for a Frenchman, through Doctor Atterbury, who did that business for him, getting the signature even from Lord Bolingbroke's office, without any personal application to the Secretary. Lockwood, his faithful servant, he took with him to Castlewood, and left behind there: giving out ere he left London that he himself was sick, and gone to Hampshire for country air, and so departed as silently as might be upon his business.

As Frank Castlewood's aid was indispensable for Mr. Esmond's scheme, his first visit was to Bruxelles (passing by way of Antwerp, where the Duke of Marlborough was in exile), and in the first-named place Harry found his dear young Benedict, the married man, who appeared to be rather out of humour with his matrimonial chain, and clogged with

the obstinate embraces which Clotilda kept around his neck. Colonel Esmond was not presented to her; but Monsieur Simon was, a gentleman of the Royal Cravat (Esmond bethought him of the regiment of his honest Irishman, whom he had seen that day after Malplaquet, when he first set eyes on the young King); and Monsieur Simon was introduced to the Viscountess Castlewood, *née* Comptesse Wertheim; to the numerous counts, the Lady Clotilda's tall brothers; to her father the chamberlain; and to the lady his wife, Frank's mother-in-law, a tall and majestic person of large proportions, such as became the mother of such a company of grenadiers as her warlike sons formed. The whole race were at free quarters in the little castle nigh to Bruxelles which Frank had taken; rode his horses; drank his wine; and lived easily at the poor lad's charges. Mr. Esmond had always maintained a perfect fluency in the French, which was his mother tongue; and if this family (that spoke French with a twang which the Flemings use) discovered any inaccuracy in Mr. Simon's pronunciation, 'twas to be attributed to the latter's long residence in England, where he had married and remained ever since he was taken prisoner at Blenheim. His story was perfectly pat; there were none there to doubt it save honest Frank, and he was charmed with his kinsman's scheme, when he became acquainted with it; and, in truth, always admired Colonel Esmond with an affectionate fidelity, and thought his cousin the wisest and best of all cousins and men. Frank entered heart and soul into the plan, and liked it the better as it was to take him to Paris, out of reach of his brothers, his father, and his mother-in-law, whose attentions rather fatigued him.

Castlewood, I have said, was born in the same year

as the Prince of Wales; had not a little of the Prince's air, height, and figure; and, especially since he had seen the Chevalier de St. George on the occasion before-named, took no small pride in his resemblance to a person so illustrious; which likeness he increased by all means in his power, wearing fair brown periwigs, such as the Prince wore, and ribbons, and so forth, of the Chevalier's colour.

This resemblance was, in truth, the circumstance on which Mr. Esmond's scheme was founded; and having secured Frank's secrecy and enthusiasm, he left him to continue his journey, and see the other personages on whom its success depended. The place whither Mr. Simon next travelled was Bar, in Lorraine, where that merchant arrived with a consignment of broadcloths, valuable laces from Malines, and letters for his correspondent there.

Would you know how a prince, heroic from misfortunes, and descended from a line of kings, whose race seemed to be doomed like the Atridæ of old—would you know how he was employed, when the envoy who came to him through danger and difficulty beheld him for the first time? The young King, in a flannel jacket, was at tennis with the gentlemen of his suite, crying out after the balls, and swearing like the meanest of his subjects. The next time Mr. Esmond saw him, 'twas when Monsieur Simon took a packet of laces to Miss Oglethorpe: the Prince's ante-chamber in those days, at which ignoble door men were forced to knock for admission to His Majesty. The admission was given, the envoy found the King and the mistress together: the pair were at cards, and His Majesty was in liquor. He cared more for three honours than three kingdoms; and a half-dozen glasses of ratafia made him forget all his woes and his losses, his father's crown, and his grandfather's head.

Mr. Esmond did not open himself to the Prince then. His Majesty was scarce in a condition to hear him; and he doubted whether a King who drank so much could keep a secret in his fuddled head; or whether a hand that shook so, was strong enough to grasp at a crown. However, at last, and after taking counsel with the Prince's advisers, amongst whom were many gentlemen, honest and faithful, Esmond's plan was laid before the King, and her actual Majesty Queen Oglethorpe, in council. The Prince liked the scheme well enough: 'twas easy and daring, and suited to his reckless gaiety and lively youthful spirit. In the morning after he had slept his wine off he was very gay, lively, and agreeable. His manner had an extreme charm of archness, and a kind simplicity; and, to do her justice, her Oglethorpean Majesty was kind, acute, resolute, and of good counsel; she gave the Prince much good advice that he was too weak to follow, and loved him with a fidelity which he returned with an ingratitude quite royal.

Having his own forebodings regarding his scheme should it ever be fulfilled, and his usual sceptic doubts as to the benefit which might accrue to the country by bringing a tipsy young monarch back to it, Colonel Esmond had his audience of leave, and quiet Monsieur Simon took his departure. At any rate the youth at Bar was as good as the older Pretender at Hanover; if the worst came to the worst, the Englishman could be dealt with as easy as the German. Monsieur Simon trotted on that long journey from Nancy to Paris, and saw that famous town, stealthily and like a spy, as in truth he was; and where, sure, more magnificence and more misery is heaped together, more rags and lace, more filth and gilding, than in any city in this world. Here he was put in communication with the King's best friend, his half-

brother, the famous Duke of Berwick; Esmond recognised him as the stranger who had visited Castlewood now near twenty years ago. His Grace opened to him when he found that Mr. Esmond was one of Webb's brave regiment, that had once been his Grace's own. He was the sword and buckler indeed of the Stuart cause; there was no stain on his shield except the bar across it, which Marlborough's sister left him. Had Berwick been his father's heir, James the Third had assuredly sat on the English throne. He could dare, endure, strike, speak, be silent. The fire and genius, perhaps, he had not (that were given to baser men), but except these he had some of the best qualities of a leader. His Grace knew Esmond's father and history; and hinted at the latter in such a way as made the Colonel to think he was aware of the particulars of that story. But Esmond did not choose to enter on it, nor did the Duke press him. Mr. Esmond said, 'No doubt he should come by his name if ever greater people came by theirs.'

What confirmed Esmond in his notion that the Duke of Berwick knew of his case was, that when the Colonel went to pay his duty at St. Germains, Her Majesty once addressed him by the title of Marquis. He took the Queen the dutiful remembrances of her goddaughter, and the lady whom, in the days of her prosperity, Her Majesty had befriended. The Queen remembered Rachel Esmond perfectly well, had heard of my Lord Castlewood's conversion, and was much edified by that act of Heaven in his favour. She knew that others of that family had been of the only true Church too: 'Your father and your mother, M. le Marquis,' Her Majesty said (that was the only time she used the phrase). Monsieur Simon bowed very low, and said he had found other parents than his own, who had taught him differently; but

these had only one King : on which Her Majesty was pleased to give him a medal blessed by the Pope, which had been found very efficacious in cases similar to his own, and to promise she would offer up prayers for his conversion and that of the family : which no doubt this pious lady did, though up to the present moment, and after twenty-seven years, Colonel Esmond is bound to say that neither the medal nor the prayers have had the slightest known effect upon his religious convictions.

As for the splendours of Versailles, Monsieur Simon, the merchant, only beheld them as a humble and distant spectator, seeing the old King but once, when he went to feed his carps : and asking for no presentation at His Majesty's Court.

By this time my Lord Viscount Castlewood was got to Paris, where, as the London prints presently announced, her Ladyship was brought to bed of a son and heir. For a long while afterwards she was in a delicate state of health, and ordered by the physicians not to travel ; otherwise 'twas well known that the Viscount Castlewood proposed returning to England, and taking up his residence at his own seat.

Whilst he remained at Paris, my Lord Castlewood had his picture done by the famous French painter, Monsieur Rigaud, a present for his mother in London ; and this piece Monsieur Simon took back with him when he returned to that city, which he reached about May, in the year 1714, very soon after which time my Lady Castlewood and her daughter, and their kinsman, Colonel Esmond, who had been at Castlewood all this time, likewise returned to London ; her Ladyship occupying her house at Kensington, Mr. Esmond returning to his lodgings at Knightsbridge, nearer the town, and once more making his appear-

"The Vicar of Castlewood vowed he could not see any resemblance."

ance at all public places, his health greatly improved by his long stay in the country.

The portrait of my Lord, in a handsome gilt frame, was hung up in the place of honour in her Ladyship's drawing-room. His Lordship was represented in his scarlet uniform of Captain of the Guard, with a light-brown periwig, a cuirass under his coat, a blue ribbon, and a fall of Bruxelles lace. Many of her Ladyship's friends admired the piece beyond measure, and flocked to see it; Bishop Atterbury, Mr. Lesly, good old Mr. Collier, and others amongst the clergy, were delighted with the performance, and many among the first quality examined and praised it; only I must own that Doctor Tusher, happening to come up to London, and seeing the picture (it was ordinarily covered by a curtain, but on this day Miss Beatrix happened to be looking at it when the Doctor arrived), the Vicar of Castlewood vowed he could not see any resemblance in the piece to his old pupil, except, perhaps, a little about the chin, and the periwig; but we all of us convinced him that he had not seen Frank for five years or more; that he knew no more about the Fine Arts than a ploughboy, and that he must be mistaken; and we sent him home assured that the piece was an excellent likeness. As for my Lord Bolingbroke, who honoured her Ladyship with a visit occasionally, when Colonel Esmond showed him the picture he burst out laughing, and asked what devilry he was engaged on? Esmond owned simply that the portrait was not that of Viscount Castlewood; besought the Secretary on his honour to keep the secret; said that the ladies of the house were enthusiastic Jacobites, as was well known; and confessed that the picture was that of the Chevalier St. George.

The truth is, that Mr. Simon, waiting upon Lord Castlewood one day at Monsieur Rigaud's, whilst his

Lordship was sitting for his picture, affected to be much struck with a piece representing the Chevalier, whereof the head only was finished, and purchased it of the painter for a hundred crowns. It had been intended, the artist said, for Miss Oglethorpe, the Prince's mistress, but that young lady quitting Paris, had left the work on the artist's hands; and taking this piece home, when my Lord's portrait arrived, Colonel Esmond, alias Monsieur Simon, had copied the uniform and other accessories from my Lord's picture to fill up Rigaud's incomplete canvas: the Colonel all his life having been a practitioner of painting, and especially followed it during his long residence in the cities of Flanders, among the masterpieces of Vandyck and Rubens. My grandson hath the piece, such as it is, in Virginia now.

At the commencement of the month of June, Miss Beatrix Esmond, and my Lady Viscountess, her mother, arrived from Castlewood; the former to resume her services at Court, which had been interrupted by the fatal catastrophe of Duke Hamilton's death. She once more took her place, then, in Her Majesty's suite and at the Maids' table, being always a favourite with Mrs. Masham, the Queen's chief woman, partly perhaps on account of their bitterness against the Duchess of Marlborough, whom Miss Beatrix loved no better than her rival did. The gentlemen about the Court, my Lord Bolingbroke amongst others, owned that the young lady had come back handsomer than ever, and that the serious and tragic air which her face now involuntarily wore became her better than her former smiles and archness.

All the old domestics at the little house of Kensington Square were changed; the old steward that had served the family any time these five-and-twenty

years, since the birth of the children of the house, was despatched into the kingdom of Ireland to see my Lord's estate there; the housekeeper, who had been my Lady's woman time out of mind, and the attendant of the young children, was sent away grumbling to Walcote, to see to the new painting and preparing of that house, which my Lady Dowager intended to occupy for the future, giving up Castlewood to her daughter-in-law that might be expected daily from France. Another servant the Viscountess had was dismissed too—with a gratuity—on the pretext that her Ladyship's train of domestics must be diminished; so, finally, there was not left in the household a single person who had belonged to it during the time my young Lord Castlewood was yet at home.

For the plan which Colonel Esmond had in view, and the stroke he intended, 'twas necessary that the very smallest number of persons should be put in possession of his secret. It scarce was known, except to three or four out of his family, and it was kept to a wonder.

On the 10th of June, 1714, there came by Mr. Prior's messenger from Paris a letter from my Lord Viscount Castlewood to his mother, saying that he had been foolish in regard of money matters, that he was ashamed to own he had lost at play, and by other extravagances; and that instead of having great entertainments as he had hoped at Castlewood this year, he must live as quiet as he could, and make every effort to be saving. So far every word of poor Frank's letter was true, nor was there a doubt that he and his tall brothers-in-law had spent a great deal more than they ought, and engaged the revenues of the Castlewood property, which the fond mother had husbanded and improved so carefully during the time of her guardianship.

'His Clotilda,' Castlewood went on to say, 'was still delicate, and the physicians thought her lying-in had best take place at Paris. He should come without her Ladyship, and be at his mother's house about the 17th or 18th day of June, proposing to take horse from Paris immediately, and bringing but a single servant with him; and he requested that the lawyers of Gray's Inn might be invited to meet him with their account, and the land-steward come from Castlewood with his, so that he might settle with them speedily, raise a sum of money whereof he stood in need, and be back to his Viscountess by the time of her lying-in.' Then his Lordship gave some of the news of the town, sent his remembrance to kinsfolk, and so the letter ended. 'Twas put in the common post, and no doubt the French police and the English there had a copy of it, to which they were exceeding welcome.

Two days after another letter was despatched by the public post of France, in the same open way, and this, after giving news of the fashion at Court there, ended by the following sentences, in which, but for those that had the key, 'twould be difficult for any man to find any secret lurked at all:—

'(The King will take) medicine on Thursday. His Majesty is better than he hath been of late, though incommoded by indigestion from his too great appetite. Madame Maintenon continues well. They have performed a play of Mons. Racine at St. Cyr. The Duke of Shrewsbury and Mr. Prior, our envoy, and all the English nobility here, were present at it. (The Viscount Castlewood's passports) were refused to him, 'twas said; his Lordship being sued by a goldsmith for *Vaisselle plate*, and a pearl necklace supplied to Mademoiselle Meruel of the French Comedy. 'Tis a pity such news should get abroad (and travel to England) about our young nobility here.

Mademoiselle Meruel has been sent to the Fort l'Evesque ; they say she has ordered not only plate, but furniture, and a chariot and horses (under that lord's name), of which extravagance his unfortunate Viscountess knows nothing.

'(His Majesty will be) eighty-two years of age on his next birthday. The Court prepares to celebrate it with a great feast. Mr. Prior is in a sad way about their refusing at home to send him his plate. All here admired my Lord Viscount's portrait, and said it was a masterpiece of Rigaud. Have you seen it? It is (at the Lady Castlewood's house in Kensington Square). I think no English painter could produce such a piece.

'Our poor friend the Abbé hath been at the Bastile, but is now transported to the Conciergerie (where his friends may visit him. They are to ask for) a remission of his sentence soon. Let us hope the poor rogue will have repented in prison.

'(The Lord Castlewood) has had the affair of the plate made up, and departs for England.

'Is not this a dull letter? I have a cursed headache with drinking with Mat and some more over-night, and tipsy or sober am

'Thine ever ——.'

All this letter save some dozen of words which I have put above between brackets, was mere idle talk, though the substance of the letter was as important as any letter well could be. It told those that had the key, that *The King will take the Viscount Castlewood's passports and travel to England under that lord's name. His Majesty will be at the Lady Castlewood's house in Kensington Square, where his friends may visit him. They are to ask for the Lord Castlewood.* This note may have passed under Mr. Prior's eyes, and those of out new allies the French, and taught them nothing ; though it explained sufficiently to persons in London what the event was which was about to happen, as 'twill show those who read my Memoirs a hundred

years hence, what was that errand on which Colonel Esmond of late had been busy. Silently and swiftly to do that about which others were conspiring, and thousands of Jacobites all over the country clumsily caballing; alone to effect that which the leaders here were only talking about; to bring the Prince of Wales into the country openly in the face of all, under Bolingbroke's very eyes, the walls placarded with the proclamation signed with the Secretary's name, and offering five hundred pounds' reward for his apprehension: this was a stroke, the playing and winning of which might well give any adventurous spirit pleasure: the loss of the stake might involve a heavy penalty, but all our family were eager to risk that for the glorious chance of winning the game.

Nor should it be called a game, save perhaps with the chief player, who was not more or less sceptical than most public men with whom he had acquaintance in that age. (Is there ever a public man in England that altogether believes in his party? Is there one, however doubtful, that will not fight for it?) Young Frank was ready to fight without much thinking; he was a Jacobite as his father before him was; all the Esmonds were Royalists. Give him but the word, he would cry, 'God save King James!' before the palace guard, or at the Maypole in the Strand; and with respect to the women, as is usual with them, 'twas not a question of party but of faith: their belief was a passion; either Esmond's mistress or her daughter would have died for it cheerfully. I have laughed often, talking of King William's reign, and said I thought Lady Castlewood was disappointed the King did not persecute the family more: and those who know the nature of women may fancy for themselves, what needs not here be written down, the rapture

with which these neophytes received the mystery when made known to them; the eagerness with which they looked forward to its completion; the reverence which they paid the minister who initiated them into that secret Truth, now known only to a few, but presently to reign over the world. Sure there is no bound to the trustingness of women. Look at Arria worshipping the drunken clodpate of a husband who beats her; look at Cornelia treasuring as a jewel in her maternal heart the oaf her son. I have known a woman preach Jesuit's bark, and afterwards Dr. Berkeley's tar-water, as though to swallow them were a divine decree, and to refuse them no better than blasphemy.

On his return from France Colonel Esmond put himself at the head of this little knot of fond conspirators. No death or torture he knew would frighten them out of their constancy. When he detailed his plan for bringing the King back, his elder mistress thought that that Restoration was to be attributed under Heaven to the Castlewood family and to its chief, and she worshipped and loved Esmond, if that could be, more than ever she had done. She doubted not for one moment of the success of his scheme, to mistrust which would have seemed impious in her eyes. And as for Beatrix, when she became acquainted with the plan, and joined it, as she did with all her heart, she gave Esmond one of her searching bright looks. 'Ah, Harry,' says she, 'why were you not the head of our house? You are the only one fit to raise it; why do you give that silly boy the name and the honour? But 'tis so in the world: those get the prize that don't deserve or care for it. I wish I could give you *your* silly prize, Cousin, but I can't; I have tried, and I can't.' And she went away, shaking her head mournfully, but always, it seemed

to Esmond, that her liking and respect for him was greatly increased, since she knew what capability he had both to act and bear; to do and to forego.

CHAPTER IX

THE ORIGINAL OF THE PORTRAIT COMES TO ENGLAND

'Twas announced in the family that my Lord Castlewood would arrive, having a confidential French gentleman in his suite, who acted as secretary to his Lordship, and who, being a Papist, and a foreigner of a good family, though now in rather a menial place, would have his meals served in his chamber, and not with the domestics of the house. The Viscountess gave up her bedchamber contiguous to her daughter's, and having a large convenient closet attached to it, in which a bed was put up, ostensibly for Monsieur Baptiste, the Frenchman; though, 'tis needless to say, when the doors of the apartments were locked, and the two guests retired within it, the young Viscount became the servant of the illustrious Prince whom he entertained, and gave up gladly the more convenient and airy chamber and bed to his master. Madam Beatrix also retired to the upper region, her chamber being converted into a sitting-room for my Lord. The better to carry the deceit, Beatrix affected to grumble before the servants, and to be jealous that she was turned out of her chamber to make way for my Lord.

No small preparations were made, you may be sure, and no slight tremor of expectation caused the hearts of the gentle ladies of Castlewood to flutter, before the arrival of the personages who were about to

honour their house. The chamber was ornamented with flowers; the bed covered with the very finest of linen; the two ladies insisting on making it themselves, and kneeling down at the bedside and kissing the sheets out of respect for the web that was to hold the sacred person of a King. The toilet was of silver and crystal; there was a copy of 'Eikon Basiliké' laid on the writing-table; a portrait of the martyred King hung always over the mantel, having a sword of my poor Lord Castlewood underneath it, and a little picture or emblem which the widow loved always to have before her eyes on waking, and in which the hair of her lord and her two children was worked together. Her books of private devotions, as they were all of the English Church, she carried away with her to the upper apartment, which she destined for herself. The ladies showed Mr. Esmond, when they were completed, the fond preparations they had made. 'Twas then Beatrix knelt down and kissed the linen sheets. As for her mother, Lady Castlewood made a curtsey at the door, as she would have done to the altar on entering a church, and owned that she considered the chamber in a manner sacred.

The company in the servants' hall never for a moment supposed that these preparations were made for any other person than the young Viscount, the lord of the house, whom his fond mother had been for so many years without seeing. Both ladies were perfect housewives, having the greatest skill in the making of confections, scented waters, &c., and keeping a notable superintendence over the kitchen. Calves enough were killed to feed an army of prodigal sons, Esmond thought, and laughed when he came to wait on the ladies, on the day when the guests were to arrive, to find two pairs of the finest and roundest arms to be seen in England (my Lady Castlewood

was remarkable for this beauty of her person), covered with flour up above the elbows, and preparing paste, and turning rolling-pins in the housekeeper's closet. The guests would not arrive till supper time, and my Lord would prefer having that meal in his own chamber. You may be sure the brightest plate of the house was laid out there, and can understand why it was that the ladies insisted that they alone would wait upon the young chief of the family.

Taking horse, Colonel Esmond rode rapidly to Rochester, and there awaited the King in that very town where his father had last set his foot on the English shore. A room had been provided at an inn there for my Lord Castlewood and his servant; and Colonel Esmond timed his ride so well that he had scarce been half-an-hour in the place, and was looking over the balcony into the yard of the inn, when two travellers rode in at the inn gate, and the Colonel running down, the next moment embraced his dear young lord.

My Lord's companion acting the part of a domestic, dismounted, and was for holding the Viscount's stirrup; but Colonel Esmond, calling to his own man, who was in the court, bade him take the horses and settle with the lad who had ridden the post along with the two travellers, crying out in a cavalier tone in the French language to my Lord's companion, and affecting to grumble that my Lord's fellow was a Frenchman, and did not know the money or habits of the country:—'My man will see to the horses, Baptiste,' says Colonel Esmond: 'do you understand English?' 'Very leetle?' 'So, follow my Lord and wait upon him at dinner in his own room.' The landlord and his people came up presently bearing the dishes; 'twas well they made a noise and stir in the gallery, or they might have found Colonel

Esmond on his knee before Lord Castlewood's servant, welcoming His Majesty to his kingdom, and kissing the hand of the King. We told the landlord that the Frenchman would wait on his master; and Esmond's man was ordered to keep sentry in the gallery without the door. The Prince dined with a good appetite, laughing and talking very gaily, and condescendingly bidding his two companions to sit with him at table. He was in better spirits than poor Frank Castlewood, who Esmond thought might be woe-begone on account of parting with his divine Clotilda; but the Prince wishing to take a short siesta after dinner, and retiring to an inner chamber where there was a bed, the cause of poor Frank's discomfiture came out; and bursting into tears, with many expressions of fondness, friendship, and humiliation, the faithful lad gave his kinsman to understand that he now new all the truth, and the sacrifices which Colonel Esmond had made for him.

Seeing no good in acquainting poor Frank with that secret, Mr. Esmond had entreated his mistress also not to reveal it to her son. The Prince had told the poor lad all as they were riding from Dover: 'I had as lief he had shot me, Cousin,' Frank said. 'I knew you were the best, and the bravest, and the kindest of all men' (so the enthusiastic young fellow went on); 'but I never thought I owed you what I do, and can scarce bear the weight of the obligation.'

'I stand in the place of your father,' says Mr. Esmond kindly, 'and sure a father may dispossess himself in favour of his son. I abdicate the twopenny crown, and invest you with the kingdom of Brentford; don't be a fool and cry; you make a much taller and handsomer Viscount than ever I could.' But the

fond boy, with oaths and protestations, laughter and incoherent outbreaks of passionate emotion, could not be got, for some little time, to put up with Esmond's raillery; wanted to kneel down to him, and kissed his hand; asked him and implored him to order something, to bid Castlewood give his own life or take somebody else's; anything, so that he might show his gratitude for the generosity Esmond showed him.

'The K——, *he* laughed,' Frank said, pointing to the door where the sleeper was, and speaking in a low tone. 'I don't think he should have laughed as he told me the story. As we rode along from Dover, talking in French, he spoke about you, and your coming to him at Bar; he called you "le grand sérieux," Don Bellianis of Greece, and I don't know what names; mimicking your manner' (here Castlewood laughed himself)—'and he did it very well. He seems to sneer at everything. He is not like a king: somehow, Harry, I fancy you are like a king. He does not seem to think what a stake we are all playing. He would have stopped at Canterbury to run after a barmaid there, had I not implored him to come on. He hath a house at Chaillot, where he used to go and bury himself for weeks away from the Queen, and with all sorts of bad company,' says Frank, with a demure look. 'You may smile, but I am not the wild fellow I was; no, no, I have been taught better,' says Castlewood devoutly, making a sign on his breast.

'Thou art my dear brave boy,' says Colonel Esmond, touched at the young fellow's simplicity, 'and there will be a noble gentleman at Castlewood so long as my Frank is there.' The impetuous young lad was for going down on his knees again, with another explosion of gratitude, but that we heard the voice from the next chamber of the august sleeper,

just waking, calling out, 'Eh, La Fleur, un verre d'eau!' His Majesty came out yawning:—'A pest,' says he, 'upon your English ale, 'tis so strong that, *ma foi*, it hath turned my head.'

The effect of the ale was like a spur upon our horses, and we rode very quickly to London, reaching Kensington at nightfall. Mr. Esmond's servant was left behind at Rochester, to take care of the tired horses, whilst we had fresh beasts provided along the road. And galloping by the Prince's side the Colonel explained to the Prince of Wales what his movements had been; who the friends were that knew of the expedition; whom, as Esmond conceived, the Prince should trust; entreating him, above all, to maintain the very closest secrecy until the time should come when his Royal Highness should appear. The town swarmed with friends of the Prince's cause; there were scores of correspondents with St. Germains; Jacobites known and secret; great in station and humble; about the Court and the Queen; in the Parliament, Church, and among the merchants in the City. The Prince had friends numberless in the army, in the Privy Council, and the Officers of State. The great object, as it seemed, to the small band of persons who had concerted that bold stroke, who had brought the Queen's brother into his native country, was, that his visit should remain unknown till the proper time came, when his presence should surprise friends and enemies alike; and the latter should be found so unprepared and disunited, that they should not find time to attack him. We feared more from his friends than from his enemies. The lies and tittle-tattle sent over to St. Germains by the Jacobite agents about London, had done an incalculable mischief to his cause, and woefully misguided him, and it was from these especially, that the persons

engaged in the present venture were anxious to defend the chief actor in it.*

The party reached London by nightfall, leaving their horses at the Posting-House over against Westminster, and being ferried over the water, where Lady Esmond's coach was already in waiting. In another hour we were all landed at Kensington, and the mistress of the house had that satisfaction which her heart had yearned after for many years, once more to embrace her son, who, on his side, with all his waywardness, ever retained a most tender affection for his parent.

She did not refrain from this expression of her feeling, though the domestics were by, and my Lord Castlewood's attendant stood in the hall. Esmond had to whisper to him in French to take his hat off. Monsieur Baptiste was constantly neglecting his part with an inconceivable levity ; more than once on the ride to London, little observations of the stranger, light remarks, and words betokening the greatest ignorance of the country the Prince came to govern, had hurt the susceptibility of the two gentlemen forming his escort ; nor could either help owning in his secret mind that they would have had his behaviour otherwise, and that the laughter and the lightness, not to say license, which characterised his talk, scarce befitted such a great Prince, and such a solemn occasion. Not but that he could act at proper times with spirit and dignity. He had behaved, as we all knew, in a very courageous

* The managers were the Bishop, who cannot be hurt by having his name mentioned, a very active and loyal Nonconformist Divine, a lady in the highest favour at Court, with whom Beatrix Esmond had communication, and two noblemen of the greatest rank, and a member of the House of Commons, who was implicated in more transactions than one in behalf of the Stuart family.

manner on the field. Esmond had seen a copy of the letter the Prince had writ with his own hand when urged by his friends in England to abjure his religion, and admired that manly and magnanimous reply by which he refused to yield to the temptation. Monsieur Baptiste took off his hat, blushing at the hint Colonel Esmond ventured to give him, and said, 'Tenez, elle est jolie, la petite mère. Foi de Chevalier! elle est charmante; mais l'autre, qui est cette nymphe, cet astre qui brille, cette Diane qui descend sur nous?' And he started back, and pushed forward, as Beatrix was descending the stair. She was in colours for the first time at her own house; she wore the diamonds Esmond gave her; it had been agreed between them, that she should wear these brilliants on the day when the King should enter the house, and a Queen she looked, radiant in charms, and magnificent and imperial in beauty.

Castlewood himself was startled by that beauty and splendour; he stepped back and gazed at his sister as though he had not been aware before (nor was he very likely) how perfectly lovely she was, and I thought blushed as he embraced her. The Prince could not keep his eyes off her; he quite forgot his menial part, though he had been schooled to it, and a little light portmanteau prepared expressly that he should carry it. He pressed forward before my Lord Viscount. 'Twas lucky the servants' eyes were busy in other directions, or they must have seen that this was no servant, or at least a very insolent and rude one.

Again Colonel Esmond was obliged to cry out, 'Baptiste,' in a loud imperious voice, 'have a care to the valise!' at which hint the wilful young man ground his teeth together with something very like a curse between them, and then gave a brief look

of anything but pleasure to his Mentor. Being reminded, however, he shouldered the little portmanteau, and carried it up the stair, Esmond preceding him, and a servant with lighted tapers. He flung down his burden sulkily in the bedchamber: —'A Prince that will wear a crown must wear a mask,' says Mr. Esmond in French.

'Ah peste! I see how it is,' says Monsieur Baptiste, continuing the talk in French. 'The Great Serious is seriously'—'Alarmed for Monsieur Baptiste,' broke in the Colonel. Esmond neither liked the tone with which the Prince spoke of the ladies, nor the eyes with which he regarded them.

The bedchamber and the two rooms adjoining it, the closet and the apartment which was to be called my Lord's parlour, were already lighted and awaiting their occupier; and the collation laid for my Lord's supper. Lord Castlewood and his mother and sister came up the stair a minute afterwards, and, so soon as the domestics had quitted the apartment, Castlewood and Esmond uncovered, and the two ladies went down on their knees before the Prince, who graciously gave a hand to each. He looked his part of Prince much more naturally than that of servant, which he had just been trying, and raised them both with a great deal of nobility as well as kindness in his air. 'Madam,' says he, 'my mother will thank your Ladyship for your hospitality to her son; for you, madam,' turning to Beatrix, 'I cannot bear to see so much beauty in such a posture. You will betray Monsieur Baptiste if you kneel to him; sure 'tis his place rather to kneel to you.'

A light shone out of her eyes; a gleam bright enough to kindle passion in any breast. There were times when this creature was so handsome, that she seemed, as it were, like Venus revealing herself a

goddess in a flash of brightness. She appeared so now; radiant, and with eyes bright with a wonderful lustre. A pang, as of rage and jealousy, shot through Esmond's heart, as he caught the look she gave the Prince; and he clenched his hand involuntarily, and looked across to Castlewood, whose eyes answered his alarm-signal, and were also on the alert. The Prince gave his subjects an audience of a few minutes, and then the two ladies and Colonel Esmond quitted the chamber. Lady Castlewood pressed his hand as they descended the stair, and the three went down to the lower rooms, where they waited awhile till the travellers above should be refreshed and ready for their meal.

Esmond looked at Beatrix, blazing with her jewels on her beautiful neck. 'I have kept my word,' says he.

'And I mine,' says Beatrix, looking down on the diamonds.

'Were I the Mogul Emperor,' says the Colonel, 'you should have all that were dug out of Golconda.'

'These are a great deal too good for me,' says Beatrix, dropping her head on her beautiful breast,—'so are you all, all!' And when she looked up again, as she did in a moment, and after a sigh, her eyes, as they gazed at her cousin, wore that melancholy and inscrutable look which 'twas always impossible to sound.

When the time came for the supper, of which we were advertised by a knocking overhead, Colonel Esmond and the two ladies went to the upper apartment, where the Prince already was, and by his side the young Viscount, of exactly the same age, shape, and with features not dissimilar, though Frank's were the handsomer of the two. The Prince sat down and bade the ladies sit. The gentlemen remained

standing: there was, indeed, but one more cover laid at the table:—'Which of you will take it?' says he.

'The head of our house,' says Lady Castlewood, taking her son's hand, and looking towards Colonel Esmond with a bow and a great tremor of the voice; 'the Marquis of Esmond will have the honour of serving the King.'

'I shall have the honour of waiting on his Royal Highness,' says Colonel Esmond, filling a cup of wine, and, as the fashion of that day was, he presented it to the King on his knee.

'I drink to my hostess and her family,' says the Prince, with no very well-pleased air; but the cloud passed immediately off his face, and he talked to the ladies in a lively, rattling strain, quite undisturbed by poor Mr. Esmond's yellow countenance, that, I dare say, looked very glum.

When the time came to take leave, Esmond marched homewards to his lodgings, and met Mr. Addison on the road that night, walking to a cottage he had at Fulham, the moon shining on his handsome serene face:—'What cheer, brother?' says Addison, laughing: 'I thought it was a footpad advancing in the dark, and behold 'tis an old friend. We may shake hands, Colonel, in the dark, 'tis better than fighting by daylight. Why should we quarrel, because I am a Whig and thou art a Tory? Turn thy steps and walk with me to Fulham, where there is a nightingale still singing in the garden, and a cool bottle in a cave I know of; you shall drink to the Pretender if you like, and I will drink my liquor my own way: I have had enough of good liquor?—no, never! There is no such word as enough as a stopper for good wine. Thou wilt not come? Come any day, come soon. You know I remember *Simois*

and the *Sigeia tellus*, and the *prælia mixta mero, mixta mero*,' he repeated, with ever so slight a touch of *merum* in his voice, and walked back a little way on the road with Esmond, bidding the other remember he was always his friend, and indebted to him for his aid in the 'Campaign' poem. And very likely Mr. Under-Secretary would have stepped in and taken t'other bottle at the Colonel's lodging, had the latter invited him, but Esmond's mood was none of the gayest, and he bade his friend an inhospitable good-night at the door.

'I have done the deed,' thought he, sleepless, and looking out into the night; 'he is here, and I have brought him; he and Beatrix are sleeping under the same roof now. Whom did I mean to serve in bringing him? Was it the Prince? was it Henry Esmond? Had I not best have joined the manly creed of Addison yonder, that scouts the old doctrine of right divine, that boldly declares that Parliament and people consecrate the Sovereign, not bishops, nor genealogies, nor oils, nor coronations.' The eager gaze of the young Prince, watching every movement of Beatrix, haunted Esmond and pursued him. The Prince's figure appeared before him in his feverish dreams many times that night. He wished the deed undone for which he had laboured so. He was not the first that has regretted his own act, or brought about his own undoing. Undoing? Should he write that word in his late years? No, on his knees before Heaven, rather be thankful for what then he deemed his misfortune, and which hath caused the whole subsequent happiness of his life.

Esmond's man, honest John Lockwood, had served his master and the family all his life, and the Colonel knew that he could answer for John's fidelity as for his own. John returned with the horses from

Rochester betimes the next morning, and the Colonel gave him to understand that on going to Kensington, where he was free of the servants' hall, and indeed courting Miss Beatrix's maid, he was to ask no questions, and betray no surprise, but to vouch stoutly that the young gentleman he should see in a red coat there was my Lord Viscount Castlewood, and that his attendant in grey was Monsieur Baptiste the Frenchman. He was to tell his friends in the kitchen such stories as he remembered of my Lord Viscount's youth at Castlewood; what a wild boy he was; how he used to drill Jack and cane him, before ever he was a soldier; everything, in fine, he knew respecting my Lord Viscount's early days. Jack's ideas of painting had not been much cultivated during his residence in Flanders with his master; and, before my young lord's return, he had been easily got to believe that the picture brought over from Paris, and now hanging in Lady Castlewood's drawing-room, was a perfect likeness of her son, the young lord. And the domestics having all seen the picture many times, and catching but a momentary imperfect glimpse of the two strangers on the night of their arrival, never had a reason to doubt the fidelity of the portrait; and next day, when they saw the original of the piece habited exactly as he was represented in the painting, with the same periwig, ribands, and uniform of the Guard, quite naturally addressed the gentleman as my Lord Castlewood, my Lady Viscountess's son.

The secretary of the night previous was now the Viscount; the Viscount wore the secretary's grey frock; and John Lockwood was instructed to hint to the world below stairs that my Lord being a Papist, and very devout in that religion, his attendant might be no other than his chaplain from Bruxelles; hence, if he took his meals in my Lord's company there was

little reason for surprise. Frank was further cautioned to speak English with a foreign accent, which task he performed indifferently well, and this caution was the more necessary because the Prince himself scarce spoke our language like a native of the island: and John Lockwood laughed with the folks below stairs at the manner in which my Lord, after five years abroad, sometimes forgot his own tongue and spoke it like a Frenchman. 'I warrant,' says he, 'that with the English beef and beer, his Lordship will soon get back the proper use of his mouth;' and, to do his new Lordship justice, he took to beer and beef very kindly.

The Prince drank so much, and was so loud and imprudent in his talk after his drink, that Esmond often trembled for him. His meals were served as much as possible in his own chamber, though frequently he made his appearance in Lady Castlewood's parlour and drawing-room, calling Beatrix 'sister,' and her Ladyship 'mother,' or 'madam,' before the servants. And, choosing to act entirely up to the part of brother and son, the Prince sometimes saluted Mrs. Beatrix and Lady Castlewood with a freedom which his secretary did not like, and which, for his part, set Colonel Esmond tearing with rage.

The guests had not been three days in the house when poor Jack Lockwood came with a rueful countenance to his master, and said: 'My Lord—that is, the gentleman—has been tampering with Mrs. Lucy' (Jack's sweetheart), 'and given her guineas and a kiss.' I fear that Colonel Esmond's mind was rather relieved than otherwise when he found that the ancillary beauty was the one whom the Prince had selected. His Royal tastes were known to lie that way, and continued so in after life. The heir of one of the greatest names, of the greatest kingdoms, and

of the greatest misfortunes in Europe, was often content to lay the dignity of his birth and grief at the wooden shoes of a French chambermaid, and to repent afterwards (for he was very devout) in ashes taken from the dust-pan. 'Tis for mortals such as these that nations suffer, that parties struggle, that warriors fight and bleed. A year afterwards gallant heads were falling, and Nithsdale in escape, and Derwentwater on the scaffold; whilst the heedless ingrate, for whom they risked and lost all, was tippling with his seraglio of mistresses in his *petite maison* of Chaillot.

Blushing to be forced to bear such an errand, Esmond had to go to the Prince and warn him that the girl whom his Highness was bribing was John Lockwood's sweetheart, an honest resolute man, who had served in six campaigns, and feared nothing, and who knew that the person calling himself Lord Castlewood was not his young master: and the Colonel besought the Prince to consider what the effect of a single man's jealousy might be, and to think of other designs he had in hand, more important than the seduction of a waiting-maid, and the humiliation of a brave man.

Ten times, perhaps, in the course of as many days, Mr. Esmond had to warn the royal young adventurer of some imprudence or some freedom. He received these remonstrances very testily, save perhaps in this affair of poor Lockwood's, when he deigned to burst out a-laughing, and said, 'What! the *soubrette* has peached to the *amoureux*, and Crispin is angry, and Crispin has served, and Crispin has been a Corporal, has he? Tell him we will reward his valour with a pair of colours, and recompense his fidelity.'

Colonel Esmond ventured to utter some other words of entreaty, but the Prince, stamping imperiously, cried out, 'Assez, milord: je m'ennuye à la prêche; I am not come to London to go to the

sermon.' And he complained afterwards to Castlewood, that 'le petit jaune, le noir Colonel, le Marquis Misanthrope' (by which facetious names his Royal Highness was pleased to designate Colonel Esmond), 'fatigued him with his grand airs and virtuous homilies.'

The Bishop of Rochester, and other gentlemen engaged in the transaction which had brought the Prince over, waited upon his Royal Highness, constantly asking for my Lord Castlewood on their arrival at Kensington, and being openly conducted to his Royal Highness in that character, who received them either in my Lady's drawing-room below, or above in his own apartment; and all implored him to quit the house as little as possible, and to wait there till the signal should be given for him to appear. The ladies entertained him at cards, over which amusement he spent many hours in each day and night. He passed many hours more in drinking, during which time he would rattle and talk very agreeably, and especially if the Colonel was absent, whose presence always seemed to frighten him; and the poor 'Colonel Noir' took that hint as a command accordingly, and seldom intruded his black face upon the convivial hours of this august young prisoner. Except for those few persons of whom the porter had the list, Lord Castlewood was denied to all friends of the house who waited on his Lordship. The wound he had received had broke out again from his journey on horseback, so the world and the domestics were informed. And Doctor A——,* his physician (I shall not mention his name, but he was physician to the Queen, of the Scots nation, and a man remarkable for his benevolence as well as his wit), gave orders

* There can be very little doubt that the Doctor mentioned by my dear father was the famous Doctor Arbuthnot.—R. E. W.

that he should be kept perfectly quiet until the wound should heal. With this gentleman, who was one of the most active and influential of our party, and the others before spoken of, the whole secret lay; and it was kept with so much faithfulness, and the story we told so simple and natural, that there was no likelihood of a discovery except from the imprudence of the Prince himself, and an adventurous levity that we had the greatest difficulty to control. As for Lady Castlewood, although she scarce spoke a word, 'twas easy to gather from her demeanour, and one or two hints she dropped, how deep her mortification was at finding the hero whom she had chosen to worship all her life (and whose restoration had formed almost the most sacred part of her prayers), no more than a man, and not a good one. She thought misfortune might have chastened him; but that instructress had rather rendered him callous than humble. His devotion, which was quite real, kept him from no sin he had a mind to. His talk showed good-humour, gaiety, even wit enough; but there was a levity in his acts and words that he had brought from among those libertine devotees with whom he had been bred, and that shocked the simplicity and purity of the English lady, whose guest he was. Esmond spoke his mind to Beatrix pretty freely about the Prince, getting her brother to put in a word of warning. Beatrix was entirely of their opinion; she thought he was very light, very light and reckless; she could not even see the good looks Colonel Esmond had spoken of. The Prince had bad teeth, and a decided squint. How could we say he did not squint? His eyes were fine, but there was certainly a cast in them. She rallied him at table with wonderful wit; she spoke of him invariably as of a mere boy; she was more fond of Esmond than ever, praised him to her brother, praised

him to the Prince, when his Royal Highness was pleased to sneer at the Colonel, and warmly espoused his cause: 'And if your Majesty does not give him the Garter his father had, when the Marquis of Esmond comes to your Majesty's Court, I will hang myself in my own garters, or will cry my eyes out.' 'Rather than lose those,' says the Prince, 'he shall be made Archbishop and Colonel of the Guard' (it was Frank Castlewood who told me of this conversation over their supper).

'Yes,' cries she, with one of her laughs—I fancy I hear it now. Thirty years afterwards I hear that delightful music. 'Yes, he shall be Archbishop of Esmond and Marquis of Canterbury.'

'And what will your Ladyship be?' says the Prince; 'you have but to choose your place.'

'I,' says Beatrix, 'will be mother of the maids to the Queen of His Majesty King James the Third—Vive le Roy!' and she made him a great curtsey, and drank a part of a glass of wine in his honour.

'The Prince seized hold of the glass and drank the last drop of it,' Castlewood said, 'and my mother, looking very anxious, rose up and asked leave to retire. But that Trix is my mother's daughter, Harry,' Frank continued, 'I don't know what a horrid fear I should have of her. I wish—I wish this business were over. You are older than I am, and wiser, and better, and I owe you everything, and would die for you—before George I would; but I wish the end of this were come.'

Neither of us very likely passed a tranquil night; horrible doubts and torments racked Esmond's soul; 'twas a scheme of personal ambition, a daring stroke for a selfish end—he knew it. What cared he, in his heart, who was king? Were not his very sympathies and secret convictions on the other side—on the side

of People, Parliament, Freedom? And here was he, engaged for a Prince that had scarce heard the word liberty; that priests and women, tyrants by nature, both made a tool of. The misanthrope was in no better humour after hearing that story, and his grim face more black and yellow than ever.

CHAPTER X

WE ENTERTAIN A VERY DISTINGUISHED GUEST AT KENSINGTON

SHOULD any clue be found to the dark intrigues at the latter end of Queen Anne's time, or any historian be inclined to follow it, 'twill be discovered, I have little doubt, that not one of the great personages about the Queen had a defined scheme of policy, independent of that private and selfish interest which each was bent on pursuing: St. John was for St. John, and Harley for Oxford, and Marlborough for John Churchill, always; and according as they could get help from St. Germains or Hanover, they sent over proffers of allegiance to the princes there, or betrayed one to the other: one cause, or one sovereign, was as good as another to them, so that they could hold the best place under him; and, like Lockit and Peachum, the Newgate chiefs in the 'Rogues' Opera' Mr. Gay wrote afterwards, had each in his hand documents and proofs of treason which would hang the other, only he did not dare to use the weapon, for fear of that one which his neighbour also carried in his pocket. Think of the great Marlborough, the greatest subject in all the world, a conqueror of princes, that had marched victorious over Germany, Flanders, and France, that had given the law to sovereigns abroad,

and been worshipped as a divinity at home, forced to sneak out of England—his credit, honours, places, all taken from him; his friends in the army broke and ruined; and flying before Harley, as abject and powerless as a poor debtor before a bailiff with a writ. A paper, of which Harley got possession, and showing beyond doubt that the Duke was engaged with the Stuart family, was the weapon with which the Treasurer drove Marlborough out of the kingdom. He fled to Antwerp, and began intriguing instantly on the other side, and came back to England, as all know, a Whig and a Hanoverian.

Though the Treasurer turned out of the army and office every man, military or civil, known to be the Duke's friend, and gave the vacant posts among the Tory party; he, too, was playing the double game between Hanover and St. Germains, awaiting the expected catastrophe of the Queen's death to be Master of the State, and offer it to either family that should bribe him best, or that the nation should declare for. Whichever the King was, Harley's object was to reign over him: and to this end he supplanted the former famous favourite, decried the actions of the war which had made Marlborough's name illustrious, and disdained no more than the great fallen competitor of his, the meanest arts, flatteries, intimidations, that would secure his power. If the greatest satirist the world ever hath seen had writ against Harley, and not for him, what a history had he left behind of the last years of Queen Anne's reign! But Swift, that scorned all mankind, and himself not the least of all, had this merit of a faithful partisan, that he loved those chiefs who treated him well, and stuck by Harley bravely in his fall, as he gallantly had supported him in his better fortune.

Incomparably more brilliant, more splendid, eloquent,

accomplished than his rival, the great St. John could be as selfish as Oxford was, and could act the double part as skilfully as ambidextrous Churchill. He whose talk was always of liberty, no more shrank from using persecution and the pillory against his opponents than if he had been at Lisbon and Grand Inquisitor. This lofty patriot was on his knees at Hanover and St. Germains too; notoriously of no religion, he toasted Church and Queen as boldly as the stupid Sacheverel, whom he used and laughed at; and to serve his turn, and to overthrow his enemy, he could intrigue, coax, bully, wheedle, fawn on the Court favourite, and creep up the backstair as silently as Oxford, who supplanted Marlborough, and whom he himself supplanted. The crash of my Lord Oxford happened at this very time whereat my history is now arrived. He was come to the very last days of his power, and the agent whom he employed to overthrow the conqueror of Blenheim, was now engaged to upset the conqueror's conqueror, and hand over the staff of government to Bolingbroke, who had been panting to hold it.

In expectation of the stroke that was now preparing, the Irish regiments in the French service were all brought round about Boulogne in Picardy, to pass over if need were with the Duke of Berwick; the soldiers of France no longer, but subjects of James the Third of England and Ireland King. The fidelity of the great mass of the Scots (though a most active, resolute, and gallant Whig party, admirably and energetically ordered and disciplined, was known to be in Scotland too) was notoriously unshaken in their King. A very great body of Tory clergy, nobility, and gentry, were public partisans of the exiled Prince; and the indifferents might be counted on to cry King George or King James, according as

either should prevail. The Queen, especially in her latter days, inclined towards her own family. The Prince was lying actually in London, within a stone's-cast of his sister's palace; the first Minister toppling to his fall, and so tottering that the weakest push of a woman's finger would send him down; and as for Bolingbroke, his successor, we know on whose side his power and his splendid eloquence would be on the day when the Queen should appear openly before her Council and say:—'This, my Lords, is my brother; here is my father's heir, and mine after me.'

During the whole of the previous year the Queen had had many and repeated fits of sickness, fever, and lethargy, and her death had been constantly looked for by all her attendants. The Elector of Hanover had wished to send his son, the Duke of Cambridge—to pay his court to his cousin the Queen, the Elector said;—in truth, to be on the spot when death should close her career. Frightened perhaps to have such a *memento mori* under her royal eyes, Her Majesty had angrily forbidden the young Prince's coming into England. Either she desired to keep the chances for her brother open yet; or the people about her did not wish to close with the Whig candidate till they could make terms with him. The quarrels of her Ministers before her face at the Council board, the pricks of conscience very likely, the importunities of her Ministers, and constant turmoil and agitation round about her, had weakened and irritated the Princess extremely; her strength was giving way under these continual trials of her temper, and from day to day it was expected she must come to a speedy end of them. Just before Viscount Castlewood and his companion came from France, Her Majesty was taken ill. The St. Anthony's fire broke out on the Royal legs; there was no hurry for the presentation of the young lord

at Court, or that person who should appear under his name; and my Lord Viscount's wound breaking out opportunely, he was kept conveniently in his chamber until such time as his physician would allow him to bend his knee before the Queen. At the commencement of July that influential lady, with whom it has been mentioned that our party had relations, came frequently to visit her young friend, the Maid of Honour, at Kensington, and my Lord Viscount (the real or supposititious), who was an invalid at Lady Castlewood's house.

On the 27th day of July, the lady in question, who held the most intimate post about the Queen, came in her chair from the Palace hard by, bringing to the little party in Kensington Square intelligence of the very highest importance. The final blow had been struck, and my Lord of Oxford and Mortimer was no longer Treasurer. The staff was as yet given to no successor, though my Lord Bolingbroke would undoubtedly be the man. And now the time was come, the Queen's Abigail said: and now my Lord Castlewood ought to be presented to the Sovereign.

After that scene which Lord Castlewood witnessed and described to his cousin, who passed such a miserable night of mortification and jealousy as he thought over the transaction, no doubt the three persons who were set by nature as protectors over Beatrix came to the same conclusion, that she must be removed from the presence of a man whose desires towards her were expressed only too clearly: and who was no more scrupulous in seeking to gratify them than his father had been before him. I suppose Esmond's mistress, her son, and the Colonel himself, had been all secretly debating this matter in their minds, for when Frank broke out, in his blunt way, with: 'I think Beatrix had best be anywhere but here,'—Lady Castlewood

said: 'I thank you, Frank, I have thought so, too;' and Mr. Esmond, though he only remarked that it was not for him to speak, showed plainly, by the delight on his countenance, how very agreeable that proposal was to him.

'One sees that you think with us, Henry,' says the Viscountess, with ever so little of sarcasm in her tone: 'Beatrix is best out of this house whilst we have our guest in it, and as soon as this morning's business is done, she ought to quit London.'

'What morning's business?' asked Colonel Esmond, not knowing what had been arranged, though in fact the stroke next in importance to that of bringing the Prince, and of having him acknowledged by the Queen, was now being performed at the very moment we three were conversing together.

The Court lady with whom our plan was concerted, and who was a chief agent in it, the Court physician, and the Bishop of Rochester, who were the other two most active participators in our plan, had held many councils, in our house at Kensington and elsewhere, as to the means best to be adopted for presenting our young adventurer to his sister the Queen. The simple and easy plan proposed by Colonel Esmond had been agreed to by all parties, which was that on some rather private day, when there were not many persons about the Court, the Prince should appear there as my Lord Castlewood, should be greeted by his sister-in-waiting, and led by that other lady into the closet of the Queen. And according to Her Majesty's health or humour, and the circumstances that might arise during the interview, it was to be left to the discretion of those present at it, and to the Prince himself, whether he should declare that it was the Queen's own brother, or the brother of Beatrix Esmond, who kissed her Royal hand. And this plan being deter-

mined on, we were all waiting in very much anxiety for the day and signal of execution.

Two mornings after that supper, it being the 27th day of July, the Bishop of Rochester breakfasting with Lady Castlewood and her family, and the meal scarce over, Doctor A.'s coach drove up to our house at Kensington, and the Doctor appeared amongst the party there, enlivening a rather gloomy company; for the mother and daughter had had words in the morning in respect to the transactions of that supper, and other adventures perhaps, and on the day succeeding. Beatrix's haughty spirit brooked remonstrances from no superior, much less from her mother, the gentlest of creatures, whom the girl commanded rather than obeyed. And feeling she was wrong, and that by a thousand coquetries (which she could no more help exercising on every man that came near her, than the sun can help shining on great and small) she had provoked the Prince's dangerous admiration, and allured him to the expression of it, she was only the more wilful and imperious the more she felt her error.

To this party, the Prince being served with chocolate in his bedchamber, where he lay late sleeping away the fumes of his wine, the Doctor came, and by the urgent and startling nature of his news, dissipated instantly that private and minor unpleasantry under which the family of Castlewood was labouring.

He asked for the guest; the guest was above in his own apartment: he bade *Monsieur Baptiste* go up to his master instantly, and requested that *my Lord Viscount Castlewood* would straightway put his uniform on, and come away in the Doctor's coach now at the door.

He then informed Madam Beatrix what her part of the comedy was to be:—'In half-an-hour,' says he, 'Her Majesty and her favourite lady will take the air in

the Cedar Walk behind the new Banqueting House. Her Majesty will be drawn in a garden chair, Madam Beatrix Esmond and *her brother*, *my Lord Viscount Castlewood*, will be walking in the private garden (here is Lady Masham's key), and will come unawares upon the Royal party. The man that draws the chair will retire, and leave the Queen, the favourite, and the Maid of Honour and her brother together; Mistress Beatrix will present her brother, and then !—and then, my Lord Bishop will pray for the result of the interview, and his Scots clerk will say Amen ! Quick, put on your hood, Madam Beatrix: why doth not His Majesty come down ? Such another chance may not present itself for months again.'

The Prince was late and lazy, and indeed had all but lost that chance through his indolence. The Queen was actually about to leave the garden just when the party reached it; the Doctor, the Bishop, the Maid of Honour, and her brother, went off together in the physician's coach, and had been gone half-an-hour when Colonel Esmond came to Kensington Square.

The news of this errand, on which Beatrix was gone, of course for a moment put all thoughts of private jealousy out of Colonel Esmond's head. In half-an-hour more the coach returned; the Bishop descended from it first, and gave his arm to Beatrix, who now came out. His Lordship went back into the carriage again, and the Maid of Honour entered the house alone. We were all gazing at her from the upper window, trying to read from her countenance the result of the interview from which she had just come.

She came into the drawing-room in a great tremor and very pale; she asked for a glass of water as her mother went to meet her, and after drinking that and

putting off her hood, she began to speak :—'We may all hope for the best,' says she ; 'it has cost the Queen a fit. Her Majesty was in her chair in the Cedar Walk, accompanied only by Lady ——, when we entered by the private wicket from the west side of the garden, and turned towards her, the Doctor following us. They waited in a side walk hidden by the shrubs, as we advanced towards the chair. My heart throbbed so I scarce could speak ; but my Prince whispered, "Courage, Beatrix," and marched on with a steady step. His face was a little flushed, but he was not afraid of the danger. He who fought so bravely at Malplaquet fears nothing.' Esmond and Castlewood looked at each other at this compliment, neither liking the sound of it.

'The Prince uncovered,' Beatrix continued, 'and I saw the Queen turning round to Lady Masham, as if asking who these two were. Her Majesty looked very pale and ill, and then flushed up ; the favourite made us a signal to advance, and I went up, leading my Prince by the hand, quite close to the chair : "Your Majesty will give my Lord Viscount your hand to kiss," says her lady, and the Queen put out her hand, which the Prince kissed, kneeling on his knee, he who should kneel to no mortal man or woman.

'"You have been long from England, my Lord,' says the Queen : "why were you not here to give a home to your mother and sister ?"

'"I am come, madam, to stay now, if the Queen desires me," says the Prince, with another low bow.

'"You have taken a foreign wife, my Lord, and a foreign religion ; was not that of England good enough for you ?"

'"In returning to my father's Church," says the

Prince, "I do not love my mother the less, nor am I the less faithful servant of your Majesty."

'Here,' says Beatrix, 'the favourite gave me a little signal with her hand to fall back, which I did, though I died to hear what should pass; and whispered something to the Queen, which made Her Majesty start and utter one or two words in a hurried manner, looking towards the Prince, and catching hold with her hand of the arm of her chair. He advanced still nearer towards it; he began to speak very rapidly; I caught the words, "Father, blessing, forgiveness," and then presently the Prince fell on his knees; took from his breast a paper he had there, handed it to the Queen, who, as soon as she saw it, flung up both her arms with a scream, and took away that hand nearest the Prince, and which he endeavoured to kiss. He went on speaking with great animation of gesture, now clasping his hands together on his heart, now opening them as though to say: "I am here, your brother, in your power." Lady Masham ran round on the other side of the chair, kneeling too, and speaking with great energy. She clasped the Queen's hand on her side, and picked up the paper Her Majesty had let fall. The Prince rose and made a further speech as though he would go; the favourite on the other hand urging her mistress, and then, running back to the Prince, brought him back once more close to the chair. Again he knelt down and took the Queen's hand, which she did not withdraw, kissing it a hundred times; my Lady all the time, with sobs and supplications, speaking over the chair. This while the Queen sat with a stupefied look, crumpling the paper with one hand, as my Prince embraced the other; then of a sudden she uttered several piercing shrieks, and burst into a great fit of hysteric tears and laughter. "Enough, enough, sir, for this time," I heard Lady

Masham say : and the chairman, who had withdrawn round the Banqueting-room, came back, alarmed by the cries. "Quick," says Lady Masham, "get some help," and I ran towards the Doctor, who, with the Bishop of Rochester, came up instantly. Lady Masham whispered the Prince he might hope for the very best and to be ready to-morrow ; and he hath gone away to the Bishop of Rochester's house to meet several of his friends there. And so the great stroke is struck,' says Beatrix, going down on her knees, and clasping her hands. 'God save the King ! God save the King !'

Beatrix's tale told, and the young lady herself calmed somewhat of her agitation, we asked with regard to the Prince, who was absent with Bishop Atterbury, and were informed that 'twas likely he might remain abroad the whole day. Beatrix's three kinsfolk looked at one another at this intelligence : 'twas clear the same thought was passing through the minds of all.

But who should begin to break the news ? Monsieur Baptiste, that is, Frank Castlewood, turned very red, and looked towards Esmond ; the Colonel bit his lips, and fairly beat a retreat into the window : it was Lady Castlewood that opened upon Beatrix with the news which we knew would do anything but please her.

'We are glad,' says she, taking her daughter's hand, and speaking in a gentle voice, 'that the guest is away.'

Beatrix drew back in an instant, looking round her at us three, and as if divining a danger. 'Why glad ?' says she, her breast beginning to heave ; 'are you so soon tired of him ?'

'We think one of us is devilishly too fond of him,' cries out Frank Castlewood.

'And which is it—you, my Lord, or is it mamma, who is jealous because he drinks my health? or is it the head of the family' (here she turned with an imperious look towards Colonel Esmond), 'who has taken of late to preach the King sermons?'

'We do not say you are too free with His Majesty.'

'I thank you, madam,' says Beatrix, with a toss of the head and a curtsey.

But her mother continued, with very great calmness and dignity: 'At least we have not said so, though we might, were it possible for a mother to say such words to her own daughter, your father's daughter.'

'*Eh? mon père*,' breaks out Beatrix, 'was no better than other persons' fathers.' And again she looked towards the Colonel.

We all felt a shock as she uttered those two or three French words; her manner was exactly imitated from that of our foreign guest.

'You had not learned to speak French a month ago, Beatrix,' says her mother sadly, 'nor to speak ill of your father.'

Beatrix, no doubt, saw that slip she had made in her flurry, for she blushed crimson: 'I have learnt to honour the King,' says she, drawing up, 'and 'twere as well that others suspected neither His Majesty nor me.'

'If you respected your mother a little more,' Frank said, 'Trix, you would do yourself no hurt.'

'I am no child,' says she, turning round on him; 'we have lived very well these five years without the benefit of your advice or example, and I intend to take neither now. Why does not the head of the house speak?' she went on; 'he rules everything here. When his chaplain has done singing the psalms, will his Lordship deliver the sermon? I am tired of

the psalms.' The Prince had used almost the very same words in regard to Colonel Esmond that the imprudent girl repeated in her wrath.

'You show yourself a very apt scholar, madam,' says the Colonel; and, turning to his mistress, 'Did your guest use these words in your Ladyship's hearing, or was it to Beatrix in private that he was pleased to impart his opinion regarding my tiresome sermon?'

'Have you seen him alone?' cries my Lord, starting up with an oath: 'by God, have you seen him alone?'

'Were he here, you wouldn't dare so to insult me; no, you would not dare:' cries Frank's sister. 'Keep your oaths, my Lord, for your wife; we are not used here to such language. Till you came, there used to be kindness between me and mamma, and I cared for her when you never did, when you were away for years with your horses and your mistress, and your Popish wife.'

'By ——,' says my Lord, rapping out another oath, 'Clotilda is an angel; how dare you say a word against Clotilda?'

Colonel Esmond could not refrain from a smile, to see how easy Frank's attack was drawn off by that feint. 'I fancy Clotilda is not the subject in hand,' says Mr. Esmond, rather scornfully; 'her Ladyship is at Paris, a hundred leagues off, preparing baby-linen. It is about my Lord Castlewood's sister, and not his wife, the question is.'

'He is not my Lord Castlewood,' says Beatrix, 'and he knows he is not; he is Colonel Francis Esmond's son, and no more, and he wears a false title; and he lives on another man's land, and he knows it.' Here was another desperate sally of the poor beleaguered garrison, and an *alerte* in another quarter.

'Again, I beg your pardon,' says Esmond. 'If there are no proofs of my claim, I have no claim. If my father acknowledged no heir, yours was his lawful successor, and my Lord Castlewood hath as good a right to his rank and small estate as any man in England. But that again is not the question, as you know very well; let us bring our talk back to it, as you will have me meddle in it. And I will give you frankly my opinion, that a house where a Prince lies all day, who respects no woman, is no house for a young unmarried lady; that you were better in the country than here: that he is here on a great end, from which no folly should divert him; and that having nobly done your part of this morning, Beatrix, you should retire off the scene awhile, and leave it to the other actors of the play.'

As the Colonel spoke with a perfect calmness and politeness, such as 'tis to be hoped he hath always shown to women,* his mistress stood by him on one side of the table, and Frank Castlewood on the other, hemming in poor Beatrix, that was behind it, and, as it were, surrounding her with our approaches.

Having twice sallied out and been beaten back, she now, as I expected, tried the *ultima ratio* of women,

* My dear father saith quite truly, that his manner towards our sex was uniformly courteous. From my infancy upwards, he treated me with an extreme gentleness, as though I was a little lady. I can scarce remember (though I tried him often) ever hearing a rough word from him, nor was he less grave and kind in his manner to the humblest negresses on his estate. He was familiar with no one except my mother, and it was delightful to witness up to the very last days the confidence between them. He was obeyed eagerly by all under him; and my mother and all her household lived in a constant emulation to please him, and quite a terror lest in any way they should offend him. He was the humblest man, with all this; the least exacting, the most easily contented; and Mr. Benson, our minister at Castlewood, who attended him at the last, ever said: 'I know not what Colonel Esmond's doctrine was, but his life and death were those of a devout Christian.'—R. E. W.

and had recourse to tears. Her beautiful eyes filled with them; I never could bear in her, nor in any woman, that expression of pain:—'I am alone,' sobbed she; 'you are three against me—my brother, my mother, and you. What have I done, that you should speak and look so unkindly at me? Is it my fault that the Prince should, as you say, admire me? Did I bring him here? Did I do aught but what you bade me, in making him welcome? Did you not tell me that our duty was to die for him? Did you not teach me, mother, night and morning, to pray for the King, before even ourselves? What would you have of me, Cousin, for you are the chief of the conspiracy against me; I know you are, sir, and that my mother and brother are acting but as you bid them: whither would you have me go?'

'I would but remove from the Prince,' says Esmond gravely, 'a dangerous temptation. Heaven forbid I should say you would yield: I would only have him free of it. Your honour needs no guardian, please God, but his imprudence doth. He is so far removed from all women by his rank, that his pursuit of them cannot but be unlawful. We would remove the dearest and fairest of our family from the chance of that insult, and that is why we would have you go, dear Beatrix.'

'Harry speaks like a book,' says Frank, with one of his oaths, 'and, by ——, every word he saith is true. You can't help being handsome, Trix; no more can the Prince help following you. My counsel is that you go out of harm's way; for, by the Lord, were the Prince to play any tricks with you, King as he is, or is to be, Harry Esmond and I would have justice of him.'

'Are not two such champions enough to guard me?' says Beatrix, something sorrowfully; 'sure with you two watching, no evil could happen to me.'

'In faith, I think not, Beatrix,' says Colonel Esmond; 'nor if the Prince knew us would he try.'

'But does he know you?' interposed Lady Castlewood, very quiet: 'he comes of a country where the pursuit of kings is thought no dishonour to a woman. Let us go, dearest Beatrix! Shall we go to Walcote or to Castlewood? We are best away from the city; and when the Prince is acknowledged, and our champions have restored him, and he hath his own house at St. James's or Windsor, we can come back to ours here. Do you not think so, Harry and Frank?'

Frank and Harry thought with her, you may be sure.

'We will go, then,' says Beatrix, turning a little pale; 'Lady Masham is to give me warning to-night how Her Majesty is, and to-morrow'——

'I think we had best go to-day, my dear,' says my Lady Castlewood; 'we might have the coach and sleep at Hounslow, and reach home to-morrow. 'Tis twelve o'clock; bid the coach, Cousin, be ready at one.'

'For shame!' burst out Beatrix, in a passion of tears and mortification. 'You disgrace me by your cruel precautions; my own mother is the first to suspect me, and would take me away as my gaoler. I will not go with you, mother; I will go as no one's prisoner. If I wanted to deceive, do you think I could find no means of evading you? My family suspects me. As those mistrust me that ought to love me most, let me leave them; I will go, but I will go alone: to Castlewood, be it. I have been unhappy there and lonely enough; let me go back, but spare me at least the humiliation of setting a watch over my misery, which is a trial I can't bear. Let me go when you will, but alone, or not at all.

You three can stay and triumph over my unhappiness, and I will bear it as I have borne it before. Let my gaoler-in-chief go order the coach that is to take me away. I thank you, Henry Esmond, for your share in the conspiracy. All my life long I'll thank you, and remember you, and you, brother, and you, mother, how shall I show my gratitude to you for your careful defence of my honour?'

She swept out of the room with the air of an empress, flinging glances of defiance at us all, and leaving us conquerors of the field, but scared, and almost ashamed of our victory. It did indeed seem hard and cruel that we three should have conspired the banishment and humiliation of that fair creature. We looked at each other in silence; 'twas not the first stroke by many of our actions in that unlucky time, which, being done, we wished undone. We agreed it was best she should go alone, speaking stealthily to one another, and under our breaths, like persons engaged in an act they felt ashamed in doing.

In a half-hour, it might be, after our talk she came back, her countenance wearing the same defiant air which it had borne when she left us. She held a shagreen case in her hand; Esmond knew it as containing his diamonds which he had given to her for her marriage with Duke Hamilton, and which she had worn so splendidly on the inauspicious night of the Prince's arrival. 'I have brought back,' says she, 'to the Marquis of Esmond the present he deigned to make me in days when he trusted me better than now. I will never accept a benefit or a kindness from Henry Esmond more, and I give back these family diamonds, which belonged to one King's mistress, to the gentleman that suspected I would be another. Have you been upon your message of coach-caller, my Lord Marquis? Will you send your valet to see

that I do not run away?' We were right, yet, by her manner, she had put us all in the wrong; we were conquerors, yet the honours of the day seemed to be with the poor oppressed girl.

That luckless box containing the stones had first been ornamented with a Baron's coronet, when Beatrix was engaged to the young gentleman from whom she parted, and afterwards the gilt crown of a duchess figured on the cover, which also poor Beatrix was destined never to wear. Lady Castlewood opened the case mechanically and scarce thinking what she did; and, behold, besides the diamonds, Esmond's present, there lay in the box the enamelled miniature of the late Duke, which Beatrix had laid aside with her mourning when the King came into the house; and which the poor heedless thing very likely had forgotten.

'Do you leave this, too, Beatrix?' says her mother, taking the miniature out, and with a cruelty she did not very often show; but there are some moments when the tenderest women are cruel, and some triumphs which angels can't forego.*

Having delivered this stab, Lady Castlewood was frightened at the effect of her blow. It went to poor Beatrix's heart: she flushed up and passed a handkerchief across her eyes, and kissed the miniature, and put it into her bosom:—'I had forgot it,' says she; 'my injury made me forget my grief; my mother has recalled both to me. Farewell, mother; I think I never can forgive you; something hath broke between us that no tears nor years can repair. I always said I was alone: you never loved me, never—

* This remark shows how unjustly and contemptuously even the best of men will sometimes judge of our sex. Lady Castlewood had no intention of triumphing over her daughter; but from a sense of duty alone pointed out her deplorable wrong.—R. E.

and were jealous of me from the time I sat on my father's knee. Let me go away, the sooner the better: I can bear to be with you no more.'

'Go, child,' says her mother, still very stern; 'go and bend your proud knees and ask forgiveness; go, pray in solitude for humility and repentance. 'Tis not your reproaches that make me unhappy, 'tis your hard heart, my poor Beatrix: may God soften it, and teach you one day to feel for your mother.'

If my mistress was cruel, at least she never could be got to own as much. Her haughtiness quite overtopped Beatrix's; and, if the girl had a proud spirit, I very much fear it came to her by inheritance.

CHAPTER XI

OUR GUEST QUITS US AS NOT BEING HOSPITABLE ENOUGH

Beatrix's departure took place within an hour, her maid going with her in the post-chaise, and a man armed on the coach-box to prevent any danger of the road. Esmond and Frank thought of escorting the carriage, but she indignantly refused their company, and another man was sent to follow the coach, and not to leave it till it had passed over Hounslow Heath on the next day. And these two forming the whole of Lady Castlewood's male domestics, Mr Esmond's faithful John Lockwood came to wait on his mistress during their absence, though he would have preferred to escort Mrs. Lucy, his sweetheart, on her journey into the country.

We had a gloomy and silent meal; it seemed as if a darkness was over the house, since the bright face of Beatrix had been withdrawn from it. In the after-

noon came a message from the favourite to relieve us somewhat from this despondency. 'The Queen hath been much shaken,' the note said; 'she is better now, and all things will go well. Let *my Lord Castlewood* be ready against we send for him.'

At night there came a second billet: 'There hath been a great battle in Council; Lord Treasurer hath broke his staff, and hath fallen never to rise again; no successor is appointed. Lord B—— receives a great Whig company to-night at Golden Square. If he is trimming, others are true; the Queen hath no more fits, but is a-bed now, and more quiet. Be ready against morning, when I still hope all will be well.'

The Prince came home shortly after the messenger who bore this billet had left the house. His Royal Highness was so much the better for the Bishop's liquor, that to talk affairs to him now was of little service. He was helped to the Royal bed; he called Castlewood familiarly by his own name; he quite forgot the part upon the acting of which his crown, his safety, depended. 'Twas lucky that my Lady Castlewood's servants were out of the way, and only those heard him who would not betray him. He inquired after the adorable Beatrix, with a Royal hiccup in his voice; he was easily got to bed, and in a minute or two plunged in that deep slumber and forgetfulness with which Bacchus rewards the votaries of that god. We wished Beatrix had been there to see him in his cups. We regretted, perhaps, that she was gone.

One of the party at Kensington Square was fool enough to ride to Hounslow that night, *coram latronibus*, and to the inn which the family used ordinarily in their journeys out of London. Esmond desired my landlord not to acquaint Madam Beatrix with his coming, and had the grim satisfaction of

passing by the door of the chamber where she lay with her maid, and of watching her chariot set forth in the early morning. He saw her smile and slip money into the man's hand who was ordered to ride behind the coach as far as Bagshot. The road being open, and the other servant armed, it appeared she dispensed with the escort of a second domestic ; and this fellow, bidding his young mistress adieu with many bows, went and took a pot of ale in the kitchen, and returned in company with his brother servant, John Coachman, and his horses, back to London.

They were not a mile out of Hounslow when the two worthies stopped for more drink, and here they were scared by seeing Colonel Esmond gallop by them. The man said in reply to Colonel Esmond's stern question, that his young mistress had sent her duty ; only that, no other message : she had had a very good night, and would reach Castlewood by nightfall. The Colonel had no time for further colloquy, and galloped on swiftly to London, having business of great importance there, as my reader very well knoweth. The thought of Beatrix riding away from the danger soothed his mind not a little. His horse was at Kensington Square (honest Dapple knew the way thither well enough) before the tipsy guest of last night was awake and sober.

The account of the previous evening was known all over the town early next day. A violent altercation had taken place before the Queen in the Council Chamber; and all the coffee-houses had their version of the quarrel. The news brought my Lord Bishop early to Kensington Square, where he awaited the waking of his Royal master above stairs, and spoke confidently of having him proclaimed as Prince of Wales and heir to the throne before that day was over. The Bishop had entertained on the previous afternoon

certain of the most influential gentlemen of the true British party. His Royal Highness had charmed all, both Scots and English, Papists and Churchmen: 'Even Quakers,' says he, 'were at our meeting; and, if the stranger took a little too much British punch and ale, he will soon grow more accustomed to those liquors; and my Lord Castlewood,' says the Bishop with a laugh, 'must bear the cruel charge of having been for once in his life a little tipsy. He toasted your lovely sister a dozen times, at which we all laughed,' says the Bishop, 'admiring so much fraternal affection.—Where is that charming nymph, and why doth she not adorn your Ladyship's tea-table with her bright eyes?'

Her Ladyship said, drily, that Beatrix was not at home that morning; my Lord Bishop was too busy with great affairs to trouble himself much about the presence or absence of any lady, however beautiful.

We were yet at table when Dr. A—— came from the Palace with a look of great alarm; the shocks the Queen had had the day before had acted on her severely; he had been sent for, and had ordered her to be blooded. The surgeon of Long Acre had come to cup the Queen, and Her Majesty was now more easy and breathed more freely. What made us start at the name of Mr. Aymé? 'Il faut être aimable pour être aimé,' says the merry Doctor; Esmond pulled his sleeve, and bade him hush. It was to Aymé's house, after his fatal duel, that my dear Lord Castlewood, Frank's father, had been carried to die.

No second visit could be paid to the Queen on that day at any rate; and when our guest above gave his signal that he was awake, the Doctor, the Bishop, and Colonel Esmond waited upon the Prince's levée, and brought him their news, cheerful or dubious. The Doctor had to go away presently, but promised to

keep the Prince constantly acquainted with what was taking place at the Palace hard by. His counsel was, and the Bishop's, that as soon as ever the Queen's malady took a favourable turn, the Prince should be introduced to her bedside; the Council summoned; the guard at Kensington and St. James's, of which two regiments were to be entirely relied on, and one known not to be hostile, would declare for the Prince, as the Queen would before the Lords of her Council, designating him as the heir to her throne.

With locked doors, and Colonel Esmond acting as secretary, the Prince and his Lordship of Rochester passed many hours of this day, composing Proclamations and Addresses to the Country, to the Scots, to the Clergy, to the People of London and England; announcing the arrival of the exile descendant of three Sovereigns, and his acknowledgment by his sister as heir to the throne. Every safeguard for their liberties, the Church and People could ask, was promised to them. The Bishop could answer for the adhesion of very many prelates, who besought of their flocks and brother ecclesiastics to recognise the sacred right of the future Sovereign and to purge the country of the sin of rebellion.

During the composition of these papers, more messengers than one came from the Palace regarding the state of the august patient there lying. At midday she was somewhat better; at evening the torpor again seized her and she wandered in her mind. At night Dr. A—— was with us again, with a report rather more favourable; no instant danger at any rate was apprehended. In the course of the last two years Her Majesty had had many attacks similar, but more severe.

By this time we had finished a half-dozen of Proclamations (the wording of them so as to offend no

parties, and not to give umbrage to Whigs or Dissenters, required very great caution), and the young Prince, who had indeed shown, during a long day's labour, both alacrity at seizing the information given him, and ingenuity and skill in turning the phrases which were to go out signed by his name, here exhibited a good-humour and thoughtfulness that ought to be set down to his credit.

'Were these papers to be mislaid,' says he, 'or our scheme to come to mishap, my Lord Esmond's writing would bring him to a place where I heartily hope never to see him; and so, by your leave, I will copy the papers myself, though I am not very strong in spelling; and if they are found they will implicate none but the person they most concern;' and so, having carefully copied the Proclamations out, the Prince burned those in Colonel Esmond's handwriting: 'And now, and now, gentlemen,' says he, 'let us go to supper, and drink a glass with the ladies. My Lord Esmond, you will sup with us to-night; you have given us of late too little of your company.'

The Prince's meals were commonly served in the chamber which had been Beatrix's bedroom, adjoining that in which he slept. And the dutiful practice of his entertainers was to wait until their Royal guest bade them take their places at table before they sat down to partake of the meal. On this night, as you may suppose, only Frank Castlewood and his mother were in waiting when the supper was announced to receive the Prince; who had passed the whole of the day in his own apartment, with the Bishop as his Minister of State, and Colonel Esmond officiating as Secretary of his Council.

The Prince's countenance wore an expression by no means pleasant, when looking towards the little company assembled, and waiting for him, he did not

see Beatrix's bright face there as usual to greet him. He asked Lady Esmond for his fair introducer of yesterday: her Ladyship only cast her eyes down, and said quietly, Beatrix could not be of the supper that night; nor did she show the least sign of confusion, whereas Castlewood turned red, and Esmond was no less embarrassed. I think women have an instinct of dissimulation; they know by nature how to disguise their emotions far better than the most consummate male courtiers can do. Is not the better part of the life of many of them spent in hiding their feelings, in cajoling their tyrants, in masking over with fond smiles and artful gaiety their doubt, or their grief, or their terror?

Our guest swallowed his supper very sulkily; it was not till the second bottle his Highness began to rally. When Lady Castlewood asked leave to depart, he sent a message to Beatrix, hoping she would be present at the next day's dinner, and applied himself to drink, and to talk afterwards, for which there was subject in plenty.

The next day, we heard from our informer at Kensington that the Queen was somewhat better, and had been up for an hour, though she was not well enough yet to receive any visitor.

At dinner a single cover was laid for his Royal Highness: and the two gentlemen alone waited on him. We had had a consultation in the morning with Lady Castlewood, in which it had been determined that, should his Highness ask further questions about Beatrix, he should be answered by the gentlemen of the house.

He was evidently disturbed and uneasy, looking towards the door constantly, as if expecting some one. There came, however, nobody, except honest John Lockwood, when he knocked, with a dish, which

those within took from him; so the meals were always arranged, and I believe the council in the kitchen were of opinion that my young lord had brought over a priest, who had converted us all into Papists, and that Papists were like Jews, eating together, and not choosing to take their meals in the sight of Christians.

The Prince tried to cover his displeasure: he was but a clumsy dissembler at that time, and when out of humour could with difficulty keep a serene countenance; and having made some foolish attempts at trivial talk, he came to his point presently, and in as easy a manner as he could, saying to Lord Castlewood, he hoped, he requested, his Lordship's mother and sister would be of the supper that night. As the time hung heavy on him, and he must not go abroad, would not Miss Beatrix hold him company at a game of cards?

At this, looking up at Esmond, and taking the signal from him, Lord Castlewood informed his Royal Highness * that his sister Beatrix was not at Kensington; and that her family had thought it best she should quit the town.

'Not at Kensington!' says he. 'Is she ill? she was well yesterday; wherefore should she quit the town? Is it at your orders, my Lord, or Colonel Esmond's, who seems the master of this house?'

'Not of this, sir,' says Frank very nobly, 'only of our house in the country, which he hath given to us. This is my mother's house, and Walcote is my father's, and the Marquis of Esmond knows he hath but to give his word, and I return his to him.'

'The Marquis of Esmond!—the Marquis of Esmond,' says the Prince, tossing off a glass, 'meddles

* In London we addressed the Prince as Royal Highness invariably; though the women persisted in giving him the title of King.

too much with my affairs, and presumes on the service he hath done me. If you want to carry your suit with Beatrix, my Lord, by locking her up in gaol, let me tell you that is not the way to win a woman.'

'I was not aware, sir, that I had spoken of my suit to Madam Beatrix to your Royal Highness.'

'Bah, bah, Monsieur! we need not be a conjuror to see that. It makes itself seen at all moments. You are jealous, my Lord, and the Maid of Honour cannot look at another face without yours beginning to scowl. That which you do is unworthy, Monsieur; is inhospitable—is, is lâche, yes, lâche' (he spoke rapidly in French, his rage carrying him away with each phrase): 'I come to your house; I risk my life; I pass it in ennui; I repose myself on your fidelity; I have no company but your Lordship's sermons or the conversations of that adorable young lady, and you take her from me, and you, you rest! Merci, Monsieur! I shall thank you when I have the means; I shall know to recompense a devotion a little importunate, my Lord—a little importunate. For a month past your airs of protector have annoyed me beyond measure. You deign to offer me the crown, and bid me take it on my knees like King John—eh! I know my history, Monsieur, and mock myself of frowning barons. I admire your mistress, and you send her to a Bastile of the Province; I enter your house, and you mistrust me. I will leave it, Monsieur; from to-night I will leave it. I have other friends whose loyalty will not be so ready to question mine. If I have Garters to give away, 'tis to noblemen who are not so ready to think evil. Bring me a coach and let me quit this place, or let the fair Beatrix return to it. I will not have your hospitality at the expense of the freedom of that fair creature.'

This harangue was uttered with rapid gesticulation such as the French use, and in the language of that nation; the Prince striding up and down the room; his face flushed, and his hands trembling with anger. He was very thin and frail from repeated illness and a life of pleasure. Either Castlewood or Esmond could have broke him across their knee, and in half a minute's struggle put an end to him; and here he was insulting us both, and scarce deigning to hide from the two, whose honour it most concerned, the passion he felt for the young lady of our family. My Lord Castlewood replied to the Prince's tirade very nobly and simply.

'Sir,' says he, 'your Royal Highness is pleased to forget that others risk their lives, and for your cause. Very few Englishmen, please God, would dare to lay hands on your sacred person, though none would ever think of respecting ours. Our family's lives are at your service, and everything we have, except our honour.'

'Honour! bah, sir, who ever thought of hurting your honour?' says the Prince, with a peevish air.

'We implore your Royal Highness never to think of hurting it,' says Lord Castlewood, with a low bow. The night being warm, the windows were open both towards the Gardens and the Square. Colonel Esmond heard through the closed door the voice of the watchman calling the hour, in the Square on the other side. He opened the door communicating with the Prince's room; Martin, the servant that had rode with Beatrix to Hounslow, was just going out of the chamber as Esmond entered it, and when the fellow was gone, and the watchman again sang his cry of 'Past ten o'clock, and a starlight night,' Esmond spoke to the Prince in a low voice, and said, 'Your Royal Highness hears that man?'

'Après, Monsieur?' says the Prince.

'I have but to beckon him from the window, and send him fifty yards, and he returns with a guard of men, and I deliver up to him the body of the person calling himself James the Third, for whose capture Parliament hath offered a reward of £500, as your Royal Highness saw on our ride from Rochester. I have but to say the word, and, by the Heaven that made me, I would say it if I thought the Prince, for his honour's sake, would not desist from insulting ours. But the first gentleman of England knows his duty too well to forget himself with the humblest, or peril his crown for a deed that were shameful if it were done.'

'Has your Lordship anything to say,' says the Prince, turning to Frank Castlewood, and quite pale with anger; 'any threat or any insult, with which you would like to end this agreeable night's entertainment?'

'I follow the head of our house,' says Castlewood, bowing gravely. 'At what time shall it please the Prince that we should wait upon him in the morning?'

'You will wait on the Bishop of Rochester early, you will bid him bring his coach hither; and prepare an apartment for me in his own house, or in a place of safety. The King will reward you handsomely, never fear, for all you have done in his behalf. I wish you a good night, and shall go to bed, unless it pleases the Marquis of Esmond to call his colleague, the watchman, and that I should pass the night with the Kensington guard. Fare you well, be sure I will remember you. My Lord Castlewood, I can go to bed to-night without need of a chamberlain.' And the Prince dismissed us with a grim bow, locking one door as he spoke, that into the supping-room, and the

other through which we passed, after us. It led into the small chamber which Frank Castlewood or *Monsieur Baptiste* occupied, and by which Martin entered when Colonel Esmond but now saw him in the chamber.

At an early hour next morning the Bishop arrived, and was closeted for some time with his master in his own apartment, where the Prince laid open to his counsellor the wrongs which, according to his version, he had received from the gentlemen of the Esmond family. The worthy prelate came out from the conference with an air of great satisfaction; he was a man full of resources, and of a most assured fidelity, and possessed of genius, and a hundred good qualities; but captious and of a most jealous temper, that could not help exulting at the downfall of any favourite; and he was pleased in spite of himself to hear that the Esmond Ministry was at an end.

'I have soothed your guest,' says he, coming out to the two gentlemen and the widow, who had been made acquainted with somewhat of the dispute of the night before. (By the version we gave her, the Prince was only made to exhibit anger because we doubted of his intentions in respect to Beatrix; and to leave us, because we questioned his honour.) 'But I think, all things considered, 'tis as well he should leave this house; and then, my Lady Castlewood,' says the Bishop, 'my pretty Beatrix may come back to it.'

'She is quite as well at home at Castlewood,' Esmond's mistress said, 'till everything is over.'

'You shall have your title, Esmond, that I promise you,' says the good Bishop, assuming the airs of a Prime Minister. 'The Prince hath expressed himself most nobly in regard of the little difference of last night, and I promise you he hath listened to my sermon, as well as to that of other folks,' says the

Doctor archly; 'he hath every great and generous quality, with perhaps a weakness for the sex which belongs to his family, and hath been known in scores of popular sovereigns from King David downwards.'

'My Lord, my Lord!' breaks out Lady Esmond, 'the levity with which you speak of such conduct towards our sex shocks me, and what you call weakness I call deplorable sin.'

'Sin it is, my dear creature,' says the Bishop, with a shrug, taking snuff; 'but consider what a sinner King Solomon was, and in spite of a thousand of wives too.'

'Enough of this, my Lord,' says Lady Castlewood, with a fine blush, and walked out of the room very stately.

The Prince entered it presently with a smile on his face, and if he felt any offence against us on the previous night, at present exhibited none. He offered a hand to each gentleman with great courtesy. 'If all your bishops preach so well as Doctor Atterbury,' says he, 'I don't know, gentlemen, what may happen to me. I spoke very hastily, my Lords, last night, and ask pardon of both of you. But I must not stay any longer,' says he, 'giving umbrage to good friends, or keeping pretty girls away from their homes. My Lord Bishop hath found a safe place for me, hard by at a curate's house, whom the Bishop can trust, and whose wife is so ugly as to be beyond all danger; we will decamp into those new quarters, and I leave you, thanking you for a hundred kindnesses here. Where is my hostess, that I may bid her farewell? to welcome her in a house of my own, soon, I trust, where my friends shall have no cause to quarrel with me.'

Lady Castlewood arrived presently, blushing with great grace, and tears filling her eyes as the Prince graciously saluted her. She looked so charming and

young, that the Doctor, in his bantering way, could not help speaking of her beauty to the Prince; whose compliment made her blush, and look more charming still.

CHAPTER XII

A GREAT SCHEME, AND WHO BALKED IT

As characters written with a secret ink come out with the application of fire, and disappear again and leave the paper white, so soon as it is cool; a hundred names of men, high in repute and favouring the Prince's cause, that were writ in our private lists, would have been visible enough on the great roll of the conspiracy, had it ever been laid open under the sun. What crowds would have pressed forward, and subscribed their names and protested their loyalty, when the danger was over! What a number of Whigs, now high in place and creatures of the all-powerful Minister, scorned Mr. Walpole then! If ever a match was gained by the manliness and decision of a few at a moment of danger; if ever one was lost by the treachery and imbecility of those that had the cards in their hands and might have played them, it was in that momentous game which was enacted in the next three days, and of which the noblest crown in the world was the stake.

From the conduct of my Lord Bolingbroke, those who were interested in the scheme they had in hand saw pretty well that he was not to be trusted. Should the Prince prevail, it was his Lordship's gracious intention to declare for him: should the Hanoverian party bring in their Sovereign, who more ready to go on his knee, and cry 'God save King

George'? And he betrayed the one Prince and the other; but exactly at the wrong time. When he should have struck for King James, he faltered and coquetted with the Whigs; and having committed himself by the most monstrous professions of devotion, which the Elector rightly scorned, he proved the justice of their contempt for him by flying and taking renegade service with St. Germains, just when he should have kept aloof: and that Court despised him, as the manly and resolute men who established the Elector in England had before done. He signed his own name to every accusation of insincerity his enemies made against him; and the King and the Pretender alike could show proofs of St. John's treachery under his own hand and seal.

Our friends kept a pretty close watch upon his motions, as on those of the brave and hearty Whig party, that made little concealment of theirs. They would have in the Elector, and used every means in their power to effect their end. My Lord Marlborough was now with them. His expulsion from power by the Tories had thrown that great captain at once on the Whig side. We heard he was coming from Antwerp; and, in fact, on the day of the Queen's death, he once more landed on English shore. A great part of the army was always with their illustrious leader; even the Tories in it were indignant at the injustice of the persecution which the Whig officers were made to undergo. The chiefs of these were in London, and at the head of them one of the most intrepid men in the world the Scots Duke of Argyle, whose conduct on the second day after that to which I have now brought down my history, ended, as such honesty and bravery deserved to end, by establishing the present Royal race on the English throne.

Meanwhile there was no slight difference of opinion amongst the councillors surrounding the Prince, as to the plan his Highness should pursue. His female Minister at Court, fancying she saw some amelioration in the Queen, was for waiting a few days, or hours it might be, until he could be brought to her bedside, and acknowledged as her heir. Mr. Esmond was for having him march thither, escorted by a couple of troops of Horse Guards, and openly presenting himself to the Council. During the whole of the night of the 29th-30th July, the Colonel was engaged with gentlemen of the military profession, whom 'tis needless here to name; suffice it to say that several of them had exceeding high rank in the army, and one of them in especial was a General, who, when he heard the Duke of Marlborough was coming on the other side, waved his crutch over his head with a huzzah, at the idea that he should march out and engage him. Of the three Secretaries of State, we knew that one was devoted to us. The Governor of the Tower was ours; the two companies on duty at Kensington barrack were safe; and we had intelligence, very speedy and accurate, of all that took place at the Palace within.

At noon, on the 30th of July, a message came to the Prince's friends that the Committee of Council was sitting at Kensington Palace, their Graces of Ormond and Shrewsbury, and Archbishop of Canterbury and the three Secretaries of State, being there asembled. In an hour afterwards, hurried news was brought that the two great Whig Dukes, Argyle and Somerset, had broke into the Council Chamber without a summons, and taken their seat at table. After holding a debate there, the whole party proceeded to the chamber of the Queen, who was lying in great weakness, but still sensible, and the Lords recommended

his Grace of Shrewsbury as the fittest person to take the vacant place of Lord Treasurer; Her Majesty gave him the staff, as all know. 'And now,' writ my messenger from Court, '*now or never is the time.*'

Now or never was the time indeed. In spite of the Whig Dukes, our side had still the majority in the Council, and Esmond, to whom the message had been brought (the personage at Court not being aware that the Prince had quitted his lodging in Kensington Square), and Esmond's gallant young aide-de-camp, Frank Castlewood, putting on sword and uniform, took a brief leave of their dear lady, who embraced and blessed them both, and went to her chamber to pray for the issue of the great event which was then pending.

Castlewood sped to the barrack to give warning to the captain of the Guard there; and then went to the 'King's Arms' tavern at Kensington, where our friends were assembled, having come by parties of twos and threes, riding or in coaches, and were got together in the upper chamber, fifty-three of them; their servants, who had been instructed to bring arms likewise, being below in the garden of the tavern, where they were served with drink. Out of this garden is a little door that leads into the road of the Palace, and through this it was arranged that masters and servants were to march; when that signal was given, and that Personage appeared, for whom all were waiting. There was in our company the famous officer next in command to the Captain-General of the Forces, his Grace the Duke of Ormond, who was within at the Council. There were with him two more lieutenant-generals, nine major-generals and brigadiers, seven colonels, eleven Peers of Parliament, and twenty-one members of the House of Commons. The Guard was with us within and without the

Palace; the Queen was with us; the Council (save the two Whig Dukes, that must have succumbed); the day was our own, and with a beating heart Esmond walked rapidly to the Mall of Kensington, where he had parted with the Prince on the night before. For three nights the Colonel had not been to bed; the last had been passed summoning the Prince's friends together, of whom the great majority had no sort of inkling of the transaction pending until they were told that he was actually on the spot, and were summoned to strike the blow. The night before and after the altercation with the Prince, my gentleman, having suspicions of his Royal Highness, and fearing lest he should be minded to give us the slip, and fly off after his fugitive beauty, had spent, if the truth must be told, at the 'Greyhound' tavern, over against my Lady Castlewood's house in Kensington Square, with an eye on the door, lest the Prince, should escape from it. The night before that he had passed in his boots at the 'Crown' at Hounslow, where he must watch forsooth all night, in order to get one moment's glimpse of Beatrix in the morning. And fate had decreed that he was to have a fourth night's ride and wakefulness before his business was ended.

He ran to the curate's house in Kensington Mall, and asked for Mr. Bates, the name the Prince went by. The curate's wife said Mr. Bates had gone abroad very early in the morning in his boots, saying he was going to the Bishop of Rochester's house at Chelsey. But the Bishop had been at Kensington himself two hours ago to seek for Mr. Bates, and had returned in his coach to his own house, when he heard that the gentleman was gone thither to seek him.

This absence was most unpropitious, for an hour's delay might cost a kingdom; Esmond had nothing for it but to hasten to the 'King's Arms,' and tell the

gentlemen there assembled that Mr. George (as we called the Prince there) was not at home, but that Esmond would go fetch him ; and taking a General's coach that happened to be there, Esmond drove across the country to Chelsey, to the Bishop's house there.

The porter said two gentlemen were with his Lordship, and Esmond ran past this sentry up to the locked door of the Bishop's study, at which he rattled, and was admitted presently. Of the Bishop's guests one was a brother prelate, and the other the Abbé G——.

'Where is Mr. George?' says Mr. Esmond ; 'now is the time.'

The Bishop looked scared. 'I went to his lodging,' he said, 'and they told me he was come hither. I returned as quick as coach would carry me ; and he hath not been here.'

The Colonel burst out with an oath ; that was all he could say to their reverences : ran down the stairs again, and bidding the coachman, an old friend and fellow-campaigner, drive as if he was charging the French with his master at Wynendael—they were back at Kensington in half-an-hour.

Again Esmond went to the curate's house. Mr. Bates had not returned. The Colonel had to go with this blank errand to the gentlemen at the 'King's Arms,' that were grown very impatient by this time.

Out of the window of the tavern, and looking over the garden wall, you can see the green before Kensington Palace, the Palace gate (round which the Ministers' coaches were standing), and the barrack building. As we were looking out from this window in gloomy discourse, we heard presently trumpets blowing, and some of us ran to the window of the front room, looking into the High Street of Kensington, and saw a regiment of horse coming.

'It's Ormond's Guards,' says one.

'No, by God, it's Argyle's old regiment!' says my General, clapping down his crutch.

It was, indeed, Argyle's regiment that was brought from Westminster, and that took the place of the regiment at Kensington on which we could rely.

'Oh, Harry!' says one of the Generals there present, 'you were born under an unlucky star; I begin to think that there's no Mr. George, nor Mr. Dragon either. 'Tis not the peerage I care for, for our name is so ancient and famous, that merely to be called Lord Lydiard would do me no good; but 'tis the chance you promised me of fighting Marlborough.'

As we are talking, Castlewood entered the room with a disturbed air.

'What news, Frank?' says the Colonel. 'Is Mr. George coming at last?'

'Damn him, look here!' says Castlewood, holding out a paper. 'I found it in the book—the what you call it, "Eikum Basilikum,"—that villain Martin put it there—he said his young mistress bade him. It was directed to me, but it was meant for him I know, and I broke the seal and read it.'

The whole assembly of officers seemed to swim away before Esmond's eyes as he read the paper; all that was written on it was:—'Beatrix Esmond is sent away to prison, to Castlewood, where she will pray for happier days.'

'Can you guess where he is?' says Castlewood.

'Yes,' says Colonel Esmond. He knew full well; Frank knew full well: our instinct told whither that traitor had fled.

He had courage to turn to the company and say: 'Gentlemen, I fear very much that Mr. George will not be here to-day: something hath happened—and —and—I very much fear some accident may befall

him, which must keep him out of the way. Having had your noon's draught, you had best pay the reckoning and go home; there can be no game where there is no one to play it.'

Some of the gentlemen went away without a word, others called to pay their duty to Her Majesty and ask for her health. The little army disappeared into the darkness out of which it had been called; there had been no writings, no paper to implicate any man. Some few officers and members of Parliament had been invited over night to breakfast at the 'King's Arms' at Kensington; and they had called for their bill and gone home.

CHAPTER XIII

AUGUST 1ST, 1714

'Does my mistress know of this?' Esmond asked of Frank, as they walked along.

'My mother found the letter in the book, on the toilet-table. She had writ it ere she had left home,' Frank said. 'Mother met her on the stairs, with her hand upon the door, trying to enter, and never left her after that till she went away. He did not think of looking at it there, nor had Martin the chance of telling him. I believe the poor devil meant no harm, though I half killed him; he thought 'twas to Beatrix's brother he was bringing the letter.'

Frank never said a word of reproach to me for having brought the villain amongst us. As we knocked at the door I said, 'When will the horses be ready?' Frank pointed with his cane, they were turning the street that moment.

We went up and bade adieu to our mistress; she

was in a dreadful state of agitation by this time, and that Bishop was with her whose company she was so fond of.

'Did you tell him, my Lord,' says Esmond, 'that Beatrix was at Castlewood?' The Bishop blushed and stammered: 'Well,' says he, 'I'——

'You served the villain right,' broke out Mr. Esmond, 'and he has lost a crown by what you told him.'

My mistress turned quite white. 'Henry, Henry,' says she, 'do not kill him!'

'It may not be too late,' says Esmond; 'he may not have gone to Castlewood; pray God it is not too late.' The Bishop was breaking out with some *banale* phrases about loyalty, and the sacredness of the Sovereign's person; but Esmond sternly bade him hold his tongue, burn all papers, and take care of Lady Castlewood; and in five minutes he and Frank were in the saddle, John Lockwood behind them, riding towards Castlewood at a rapid pace.

We were just got to Alton, when who should meet us but old Lockwood, the porter from Castlewood, John's father, walking by the side of the Hexton flying-coach, who slept the night at Alton. Lockwood said his young mistress had arrived at home on Wednesday night, and this morning, Friday, had despatched him with a packet for my Lady at Kensington, saying the letter was of great importance.

We took the freedom to break it, while Lockwood stared with wonder, and cried out his 'Lord bless me's,' and 'Who'd a thought it's' at the sight of his young lord, whom he had not seen these seven years.

The packet from Beatrix contained no news of importance at all. It was written in a jocular strain, affecting to make light of her captivity. She asked

whether she might have leave to visit Mrs. Tusher, or to walk beyond the court and the garden wall. She gave news of the peacocks, and a fawn she had there. She bade her mother send her certain gowns and smocks by old Lockwood; she sent her duty to a certain Person, if certain other persons permitted her to take such a freedom; how that, as she was not able to play cards with him, she hoped he would read good books, such as Doctor Atterbury's sermons and 'Eikon Basiliké:' she was going to read good books; she thought her pretty mamma would like to know she was not crying her eyes out.

'Who is in the house besides you, Lockwood?' says the Colonel.

'There be the laundry-maid, and the kitchen-maid, Madam Beatrix's maid, the man from London, and that be all; and he sleepeth in my lodge away from the maids,' says old Lockwood.

Esmond scribbled a line with a pencil on the note, giving it to the old man, and bidding him go on to his lady. We knew why Beatrix had been so dutiful on a sudden, and why she spoke of 'Eikon Basiliké.' She writ this letter to put the Prince on the scent, and the porter out of the way.

'We have a fine moonlight night for riding on,' says Esmond: 'Frank, we may reach Castlewood in time yet.' All the way along they made inquiries at the post-houses, when a tall young gentleman in a grey suit, with a light-brown periwig, just the colour of my Lord's, had been seen to pass. He had set off at six that morning, and we at three in the afternoon. He rode almost as quickly as we had done; he was seven hours ahead of us still when we reached the last stage.

We rode over Castlewood Downs before the breaking of dawn. We passed the very spot where the car

was upset fourteen years since, and Mohun lay. The village was not up yet, nor the forge lighted, as we rode through it, passing by the elms, where the rooks were still roosting, and by the church, and over the bridge. We got off our horses at the bridge and walked up to the gate.

'If she is safe,' says Frank, trembling, and his honest eyes filling with tears, 'a silver statue to Our Lady!' He was going to rattle at the great iron knocker on the oak gate; but Esmond stopped his kinsman's hand. He had his own fears, his own hopes, his own despairs and griefs, too; but he spoke not a word of these to his companion, or showed any signs of emotion.

He went and tapped at the little window at the porter's lodge, gently, but repeatedly, until the man came to the bars.

'Who's there?' says he, looking out. It was the servant from Kensington.

'My Lord Castlewood and Colonel Esmond,' we said, from below. 'Open the gate and let us in without any noise.'

'My Lord Castlewood?' says the other; 'my Lord's here, and in bed.'

'Open, d—— you,' says Castlewood, with a curse.

'I shall open to no one,' says the man, shutting the glass window as Frank drew a pistol. He would have fired at the porter, but Esmond again held his hand.

'There are more ways than one,' says he, 'of entering such a great house as this.' Frank grumbled that the west gate was half-a-mile round. 'But I know of a way that's not a hundred yards off,' says Mr. Esmond; and leading his kinsman close along the wall, and by the shrubs which had now grown thick on what had been an old moat about the house, they came to the buttress, at the side of which the

little window was, which was Father Holt's private door. Esmond climbed up to this easily, broke a pane that had been mended, and touched the spring inside, and the two gentlemen passed in that way, treading as lightly as they could; and so going through the passage into the court, over which the dawn was now reddening, and where the fountain plashed in the silence.

They sped instantly to the porter's lodge, where the fellow had not fastened his door that led into the court; and pistol in hand came upon the terrified wretch, and bade him be silent. Then they asked him (Esmond's head reeled, and he almost fell as he spoke) when Lord Castlewood had arrived? He said on the previous evening, about eight of the clock.—'And what then?'—His Lordship supped with his sister.—'Did the man wait?'—Yes, he and my Lady's maid both waited: the other servants made the supper; and there was no wine, and they could give his Lordship but milk, at which he grumbled; and—and Madam Beatrix kept Miss Lucy always in the room with her. And there being a bed across the court in the Chaplain's room, she had arranged my Lord was to sleep there. Madam Beatrix had come downstairs laughing with the maids, and had locked herself in, and my Lord had stood for a while talking to her through the door, and she laughing at him. And then he paced the court awhile, and she came again to the upper window; and my Lord implored her to come down and walk in the room; but she would not, and laughed at him again, and shut the window; and so my Lord, uttering what seemed curses, but in a foreign language, went to the Chaplain's room to bed.

'Was this all?'—'All,' the man swore upon his honour; all, as he hoped to be saved.—'Stop, there

was one thing more. My Lord, on arriving, and once or twice during supper, did kiss his sister, as was natural, and she kissed him.' At this Esmond ground his teeth with rage, and well nigh throttled the amazed miscreant who was speaking, whereas Castlewood, seizing hold of his cousin's hand, burst into a great fit of laughter.

'If it amuses thee,' says Esmond in French, 'that your sister should be exchanging of kisses with a stranger, I fear poor Beatrix will give thee plenty of sport.'—Esmond darkly thought, how Hamilton, Ashburnham, had before been masters of those roses that the young Prince's lips were now feeding on. He sickened at that notion. Her cheek was desecrated, her beauty tarnished; shame and honour stood between it and him. The love was dead within him; had she a crown to bring him with her love, he felt that both would degrade him.

But this wrath against Beatrix did not lessen the angry feelings of the Colonel against the man who had been the occasion if not the cause of the evil. Frank sat down on a stone bench in the courtyard, and fairly fell asleep, while Esmond paced up and down the court, debating what should ensue. What mattered how much or how little had passed between the Prince and the poor faithless girl? They were arrived in time perhaps to rescue her person, but not her mind: had she not instigated the young Prince to come to her; suborned servants, dismissed others, so that she might communicate with him? The treacherous heart within her had surrendered, though the place was safe; and it was to win this that he had given a life's struggle and devotion: this, that she was ready to give away for the bribe of a coronet or a wink of the Prince's eye.

When he had thought his thoughts out he shook up

poor Frank from his sleep, who rose yawning, and said he had been dreaming of Clotilda. 'You must back me,' says Esmond, 'in what I am going to do. I have been thinking that yonder scoundrel may have been instructed to tell that story, and that the whole of it may be a lie; if it be, we shall find it out from the gentleman who is asleep yonder. See if the door leading to my Lady's rooms' (so we called the rooms at the north-west angle of the house), 'see if the door is barred as he saith.' We tried; it was indeed as the lacquey had said, closed within.

'It may have been opened and shut afterwards,' says poor Esmond; 'the foundress of our family let our ancestor in in that way.'

'What will you do, Harry, if—if what that fellow saith should turn out untrue?' The young man looked scared and frightened into his kinsman's face; I dare say it wore no very pleasant expression.

'Let us first go see whether the two stories agree,' says Esmond; and went in at the passage and opened the door into what had been his own chamber now for well nigh five-and-twenty years. A candle was still burning, and the Prince asleep dressed on the bed —Esmond did not care for making a noise. The Prince started up in his bed, seeing two men in his chamber: 'Qui est là?' says he, and took a pistol from under his pillow.

'It is the Marquis of Esmond,' says the Colonel, 'come to welcome His Majesty to his house of Castlewood, and to report of what hath happened in London. Pursuant to the King's orders, I passed the night before last, after leaving His Majesty, in waiting upon the friends of the King. It is a pity that His Majesty's desire to see the country and to visit our poor house should have caused the King to quit London without notice yesterday, when the oppor-

tunity happened which in all human probability may not occur again; and had the King not chosen to ride to Castlewood, the Prince of Wales might have slept at St. James's.'

'Sdeath! gentlemen,' says the Prince, starting off his bed, whereon he was lying in his clothes, 'the Doctor was with me yesterday morning, and after watching by my sister all night, told me I might not hope to see the Queen.'

'It would have been otherwise,' says Esmond with another bow; 'as, by this time, the Queen may be dead in spite of the Doctor. The Council was met, a new Treasurer was appointed, the troops were devoted to the King's cause; and fifty loyal gentlemen of the greatest names of this kingdom were assembled to accompany the Prince of Wales, who might have been the acknowledged heir of the throne, or the possessor of it by this time, had your Majesty not chosen to take the air. We were ready: there was only one person that failed us, your Majesty's gracious'——

'Morbleu, Monsieur, you give me too much Majesty,' said the Prince, who had now risen up and seemed to be looking to one of us to help him to his coat. But neither stirred.

'We shall take care,' says Esmond, 'not much oftener to offend in that particular.'

'What mean you, my Lord?' says the Prince, and muttered something about a *guet-à-pens*, which Esmond caught up.

'The snare, sir,' said he, 'was not of our laying; it is not we that invited you. We came to avenge, and not to compass, the dishonour of our family.'

'Dishonour! Morbleu, there has been no dishonour,' says the Prince, turning scarlet, 'only a little harmless playing.'

'That was meant to end seriously.'

'I swear,' the Prince broke out impetuously, 'upon the honour of a gentleman, my lords'——

'That we arrived in time. No wrong hath been done, Frank,' says Colonel Esmond, turning round to young Castlewood, who stood at the door as the talk was going on. 'See! here is a paper whereon His Majesty hath deigned to commence some verses in honour, or dishonour, of Beatrix. Here is "Madame" and "Flamme," "Cruelle" and "Rebelle," and "Amour" and "Jour," in the Royal writing and spelling. Had the Gracious lover been happy, he had not passed his time in sighing.' In fact, and actually as he was speaking, Esmond cast his eyes down towards the table, and saw a paper on which my young Prince had been scrawling a madrigal, that was to finish his charmer on the morrow.

'Sir,' says the Prince, burning with rage (he had assumed his Royal coat unassisted by this time), 'did I come here to receive insults?'

'To confer them, may it please your Majesty,' says the Colonel, with a very low bow, 'and the gentlemen of our family are come to thank you.'

'*Malédiction!*' says the young man, tears starting into his eyes with helpless rage and mortification. 'What will you with me, gentlemen?'

'If your Majesty will please to enter the next apartment,' says Esmond, preserving his grave tone, 'I have some papers there which I would gladly submit to you, and by your permission I will lead the way;' and, taking the taper up, and backing before the Prince with very great ceremony, Mr. Esmond passed into the little Chaplain's room, through which we had just entered into the house. 'Please to set a chair for His Majesty, Frank,' says the Colonel to his companion, who wondered almost as much at this scene, and was

as much puzzled by it, as the other actor in it. Then going to the crypt over the mantelpiece, the Colonel opened it, and drew thence the papers which so long had lain there.

'Here, may it please your Majesty,' says he, 'is the Patent of Marquis sent over by your Royal Father at St. Germains to Viscount Castlewood, my father: here is the witnessed certificate of my father's marriage to my mother, and of my birth and christening; I was christened of that religion of which your sainted sire gave all through life so shining an example. These are my titles, dear Frank, and this what I do with them: here go Baptism and Marriage, and here the Marquisate and the August Sign-Manual, with which your predecessor was pleased to honour our race.' And as Esmond spoke he set the papers burning in the brazier. 'You will please, sir, to remember,' he continued, 'that our family has ruined itself by fidelity to yours: that my grandfather spent his estate, and gave his blood and his son to die for your service; that my dear lord's grandfather (for lord you are now, Frank, by right and title too) died for the same cause; that my poor kinswoman, my father's second wife, after giving away her honour to your wicked perjured race, sent all her wealth to the King; and got in return that precious title that lies in ashes, and this inestimable yard of blue riband. I lay this at your feet and stamp upon it: I draw this sword, and break it and deny you; and, had you completed the wrong you designed us, by Heaven I would have driven it through your heart, and no more pardoned you than your father pardoned Monmouth. Frank will do the same, won't you, Cousin?'

Frank, who had been looking on with a stupid air at the papers as they flamed in the old brazier, took out his sword and broke it, holding his head down:

—'I go with my cousin,' says he, giving Esmond a grasp of the hand. 'Marquis or not, by ——, I stand by him any day. I beg your Majesty's pardon for swearing; that is—that is—I'm for the Elector of Hanover. It's all your Majesty's own fault. The Queen's dead most likely by this time. And you might have been King if you hadn't come dangling after Trix.'

'Thus to lose a crown,' says the young Prince, starting up, and speaking French in his eager way; 'to lose the loveliest woman in the world; to lose the loyalty of such hearts as yours, is not this, my Lords, enough of humiliation?—Marquis, if I go on my knees, will you pardon me?—No, I can't do that, but I can offer you reparation, that of honour, that of gentlemen. Favour me by crossing the sword with mine: yours is broke—see, yonder in the armoire are two;' and the Prince took them out as eager as a boy, and held them towards Esmond:—'Ah! you will? Merci! Monsieur, merci!'

Extremely touched by this immense mark of condescension and repentance for wrong done, Colonel Esmond bowed down so low as almost to kiss the gracious young hand that conferred on him such an honour, and took his guard in silence. The swords were no sooner met, than Castlewood knocked up Esmond's with the blade of his own, which he had broke off short at the shell; and the Colonel falling back a step dropped his point with another very low bow, and declared himself perfectly satisfied.

'Eh bien, Vicomte!' says the young Prince, who was a boy, and a French boy, 'il ne nous reste qu'une chose à faire:' he placed his sword upon the table, and the fingers of his two hands upon his breast:—'We have one more thing to do,' says he; 'you do not divine it?' He stretched out his arms:—'*Embrassons nous!*'

The talk was scarce over when Beatrix entered the room:—What came she to seek there? She started and turned pale at the sight of her brother and kinsman, drawn swords, broken sword-blades, and papers yet smouldering in the brazier.

'Charming Beatrix,' says the Prince, with a blush which became him very well, 'these lords have come a-horseback from London, where my sister lies in a despaired state, and where her successor makes himself desired. Pardon me for my escapade of last evening. I had been so long a prisoner, that I seized the occasion of a promenade on horseback, and my horse naturally bore me towards you. I found you a queen in your little court, where you deigned to entertain me. Present my homages to your maids of honour. I sighed as you slept, under the window of your chamber, and then retired to seek rest in my own. It was there that these gentlemen agreeably roused me. Yes, milords, for that is a happy day that makes a Prince acquainted, at whatever cost to his vanity, with such a noble heart as that of the Marquis of Esmond. Mademoiselle, may we take your coach to town? I saw it in the hangar, and this poor Marquis must be dropping with sleep.'

'Will it please the King to breakfast before he goes?' was all Beatrix could say. The roses had shuddered out of her cheeks; her eyes were glaring; she looked quite old. She came up to Esmond and hissed out a word or two:—'If I did not love you before, Cousin,' says she, 'think how I love you now.' If words could stab, no doubt she would have killed Esmond; she looked at him as if she could.

But her keen words gave no wound to Mr. Esmond; his heart was too hard. As he looked at her he wondered that he could ever have loved her. His love of ten years was over; it fell down dead on the

spot, at the Kensington tavern, where Frank brought him the note out of 'Eikon Basiliké.' The Prince blushed and bowed low, as she gazed at him, and quitted the chamber. I have never seen her from that day.

Horses were fetched and put to the chariot presently. My Lord rode outside, and as for Esmond he was so tired that he was no sooner in the carriage than he fell asleep, and never woke till night, as the coach came into Alton.

As we drove to the 'Bell Inn' comes a mitred coach with our old friend Lockwood beside the coachman. My Lady Castlewood and the Bishop were inside; she gave a little scream when she saw us. The two coaches entered the inn almost together; the landlord and people coming out with lights to welcome the visitors.

We in our coach sprang out of it, as soon as ever we saw the dear lady, and above all the Doctor in his cassock. What was the news? Was there yet time? Was the Queen alive? These questions were put hurriedly, as Boniface stood waiting before his noble guests to bow them up the stair.

'Is she safe?' was what Lady Castlewood whispered in a flutter to Esmond.

'All's well, thank God,' says he, as the fond lady took his hand and kissed it, and called him her preserver and her dear. *She* wasn't thinking of Queens and crowns.

The Bishop's news was reassuring: at least all was not lost; the Queen yet breathed, or was alive when they left London, six hours since. ('It was Lady Castlewood who insisted on coming,' the Doctor said.) Argyle had marched up regiments from Portsmouth, and sent abroad for more; the Whigs were on the alert, a pest on them (I am not sure but the

Bishop swore as he spoke), and so too were our people. And all might be saved, if only the Prince could be at London in time. We called for horses, instantly to return to London. We never went up poor crest-fallen Boniface's stairs, but into our coaches again. The Prince and his Prime Minister in one, Esmond in the other, with only his dear mistress as a companion.

Castlewood galloped forwards on horseback to gather the Prince's friends and warn them of his coming. We travelled through the night—Esmond discoursing to his mistress of the events of the last twenty-four hours: of Castlewood's ride and his; of the Prince's generous behaviour and their reconciliation. The night seemed short enough; and the starlit hours passed away serenely in that fond company.

So we came along the road; the Bishop's coach heading ours; and, with some delays in procuring horses, we got to Hammersmith about four o'clock on Sunday morning, the first of August, and half-an-hour after, it being then bright day, we rode by my Lady Warwick's house, and so down the street of Kensington.

Early as the hour was, there was a bustle in the street, and many people moving to and fro. Round the gate leading to the Palace, where the guard is, there was especially a great crowd. And the coach ahead of us stopped, and the Bishop's man got down to know what the concourse meant.

There presently came from out of the gate—Horse Guards with their trumpets, and a company of heralds with their tabards. The trumpets blew, and the herald-at-arms came forward and proclaimed GEORGE, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith. And the people shouted, God save the King!

Among the crowd shouting and waving their hats, I caught sight of one sad face, which I had known all my life, and seen under many disguises. It was no other than poor Mr. Holt's, who had slipped over to England to witness the triumph of the good cause; and now beheld its enemies victorious, amidst the acclamations of the English people. The poor fellow had forgot to huzzah or to take his hat off, until his neighbours in the crowd remarked his want of loyalty, and cursed him for a Jesuit in disguise, when he ruefully uncovered and began to cheer. Sure he was the most unlucky of men; he never played a game but he lost it; or engaged in a conspiracy but 'twas certain to end in defeat. I saw him in Flanders after this, whence he went to Rome to the headquarters of his Order; and actually reappeared among us in America, very old, and busy, and hopeful. I am not sure that he did not assume the hatchet and mocassins there; and, attired in a blanket and war-paint, skulk about a missionary amongst the Indians. He lies buried in our neighbouring province of Maryland now, with a cross over him, and a mound of earth above him; under which that unquiet spirit is for ever at peace.

With the sound of King George's trumpets all the vain hopes of the weak and foolish young Pretender were blown away; and with that music, too, I may say, the drama of my own life was ended. That happiness, which hath subsequently crowned it, cannot be written in words; 'tis of its nature sacred and secret, and not to be spoken of, though the heart be ever so full of thankfulness, save to Heaven and the One Ear alone—to one fond being, the truest and tenderest and purest wife ever man was blessed with. As I think of the immense happiness which was in store for

me, and of the depth and intensity of that love which, for so many years, hath blessed me, I own to a transport of wonder and gratitude for such a boon—nay, am thankful to have been endowed with a heart capable of feeling and knowing the immense beauty and value of the gift which God hath bestowed upon me. Sure, love *vincit omnia;* is immeasurably above all ambition, more precious than wealth, more noble than name. He knows not life who knows not that: he hath not felt the highest faculty of the soul who hath not enjoyed it. In the name of my wife I write the completion of hope, and the summit of happiness. To have such a love is the one blessing, in comparison of which all earthly joy is of no value; and to think of her, is to praise God.

It was at Bruxelles, whither we retreated after the failure of our plot—our Whig friends advising us to keep out of the way—that the great joy of my life was bestowed upon me, and that my dear mistress became my wife. We had been so accustomed to an extreme intimacy and confidence, and had lived so long and tenderly together, that we might have gone on to the end without thinking of a closer tie; but circumstances brought about that event which so prodigiously multiplied my happiness and hers (for which I humbly thank Heaven), although a calamity befell us, which, I blush to think, hath occurred more than once in our house. I know not what infatuation of ambition urged the beautiful and wayward woman, whose name hath occupied so many of these pages, and who was served by me with ten years of such constant fidelity and passion; but ever after that day at Castlewood, when we rescued her, she persisted in holding all her family as her enemies, and left us, and escaped to France, to what a fate I disdain to tell. Nor was her son's house a home for my dear mistress;

my poor Frank was weak, as perhaps all our race hath been, and led by women. Those around him were imperious, and in a terror of his mother's influence over him, lest he should recant, and deny the creed which he had adopted by their persuasion. The difference of their religion separated the son and the mother: my dearest mistress felt that she was severed from her children and alone in the world—alone but for one constant servant on whose fidelity, praised be Heaven, she could count. 'Twas after a scene of ignoble quarrel on the part of Frank's wife and mother (for the poor lad had been made to marry the whole of that German family with whom he had connected himself), that I found my mistress one day in tears, and then besought her to confide herself to the care and devotion of one who, by God's help, would never forsake her. And then the tender matron, as beautiful in her autumn, and as pure as virgins in their spring, with blushes of love and 'eyes of meek surrender,' yielded to my respectful importunity, and consented to share my home. Let the last words I write thank her, and bless her who hath blessed it.

By the kindness of Mr. Addison, all danger of prosecution, and every obstacle against our return to England, was removed; and my son Frank's gallantry in Scotland made his peace with the King's Government. But we two cared no longer to live in England; and Frank formally and joyfully yielded over to us the possession of that estate which we now occupy, far away from Europe and its troubles, on the beautiful banks of the Potomac, where we have built a new Castlewood, and think with grateful hearts of our old home. In our Transatlantic country we have a season, the calmest and most delightful of the year, which we call the Indian summer: I often say the autumn of our life resembles that happy and serene

weather, and am thankful for its rest and its sweet sunshine. Heaven hath blessed us with a child, which each parent loves for her resemblance to the other. Our diamonds are turned into ploughs and axes for our plantations; and into negroes, the happiest and merriest, I think, in all this country; and the only jewel by which my wife sets any store, and from which she hath never parted, is that gold button she took from my arm on the day when she visited me in prison, and which she wore ever after, as she told me, on the tenderest heart in the world.

THE END

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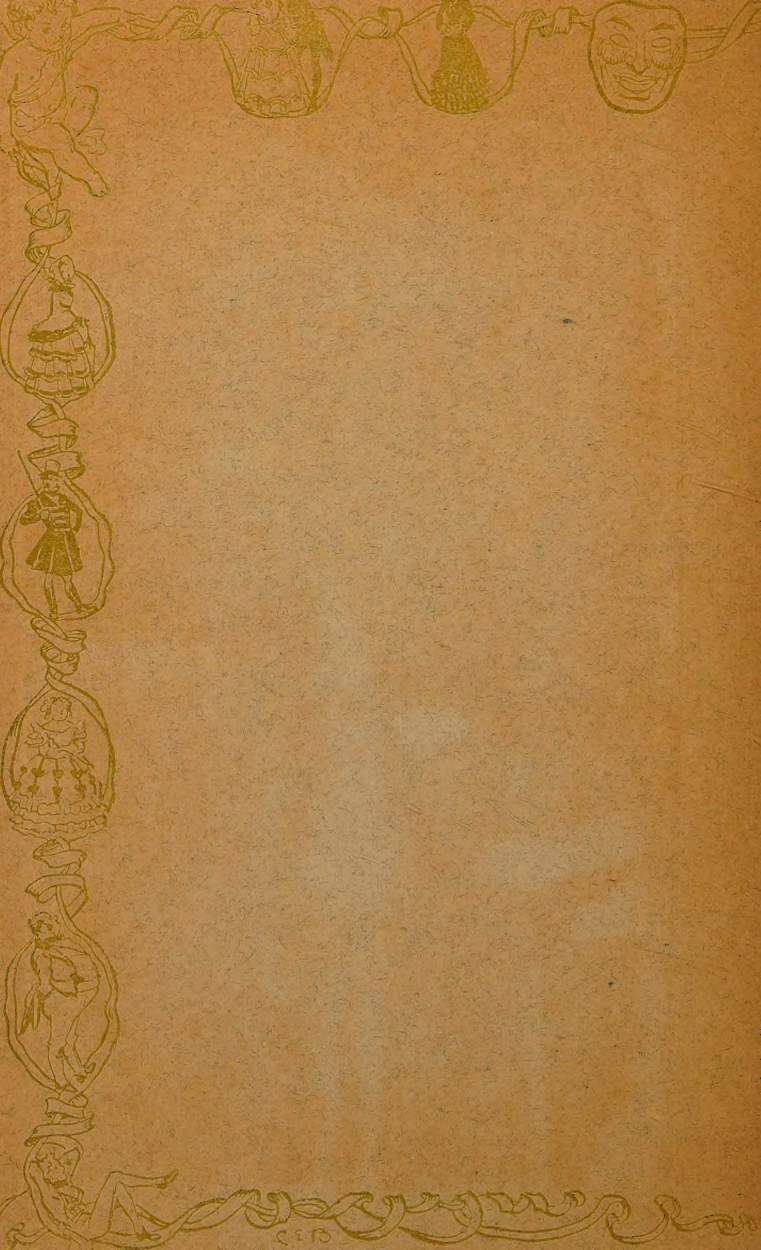

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